Foreign Policy's Mr. Zbig—*Suetonius*

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts—January 1 & 8, 1977, 75 cents

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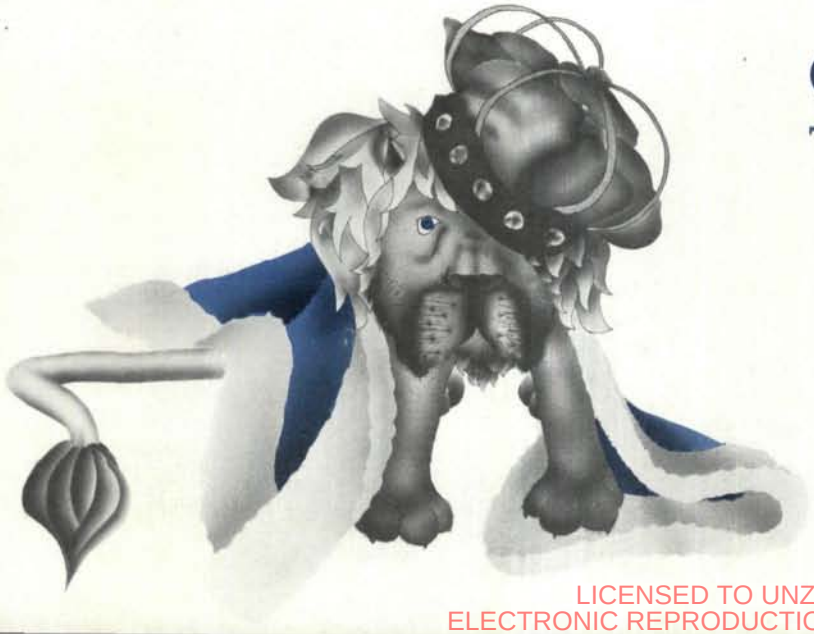
hy Humphrey Will Lose

Who's in Charge Here?

Norman Thomas
Michael Harrington

Young Camus
Germaine Brée

Books in Fashion
Anne Hollander



Great Britain:
The Lion in Winter

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TRB

from Washington ®
January 1 & 8, 1977

Balance of Terror

It looks as if Moscow would like to reduce tension with the United States. It will be interesting to see if Plains, Georgia, can do something that the whole Washington Establishment hasn't been able to do.

Roly-poly Nikita Khruschev traveled across the United States in a special train in the fall of 1959 (with a gait half way between a waddle and a toddle) proposing better relations. President Eisenhower was supposed to return the visit. They even reportedly laid out a golf links for Ike in Russia to give the general a good time. Then America's U-2 spy plane came crashing down in the middle of the Soviets and Ike didn't apologize and the thing was off.

Next came the Nixon-Kissinger détente—from the Kissinger visit to China in 1971 to Leonid Brezhnev's trip to the US in June 1973. Nobody could call Nixon soft-on-communism, that's what he called others; he was riding at the top of his power and prestige and because he was a hardliner he got away with it—the SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) agreement he signed in Moscow in May 1972, and other positive steps. Then the ground caved in under him; like a falling man waving his arms he made a desperate and ill-conceived trip to Moscow in June 1974 but he couldn't regain enough prestige to rescue the continuing SALT negotiations from the Pentagon where the sullen brass said no. Nixon handed it over to the bewildered Ford who was so pressured by Ronald Reagan that he even dropped "détente" as a nasty French word.

So now there's a brief, critical interval of maybe a couple of months that could possibly give Jimmy Carter a place in history and that has these favorable components:

Leonid Brezhnev has sent back unofficial but public word to Jimmy Carter (through treasury secretary Bill Simon among others) that he'd like to smooth things out a bit.

Also, Henry Kissinger told a group of us reporters here at breakfast last September (before the election) that he thinks "they're eager" (the Russians) to achieve accommodation, and that the two countries are "very, very close—90 percent ready" for agreement.

Among other factors, America has liquidated its Vietnam burden; Russia has awkward internal economic pressure from its satellites and would like to cut costs; Moscow must always remember the *de facto* American-Chinese relationship.

The US and the USSR two years ago in the second so-called SALT talks at Vladivostok, almost, but not quite, reached agreement to limit certain weapons. They stalled on what has been called nuclear theology—how many angels of death can dance on the nose of an A-bomb? It is almost impossible for a layman to understand it. How to compute the relative military virtues of a small, pilotless jet called a "cruise missile," which the US has, against a new bomber called a "Backfire," which Russia has? More important is the psychological block. Russia frightens the US; the US frightens Russia. Any movement to relax tension evokes suspicion.

So consider the result, expressed vividly the other day by George Kennan, onetime ambassador to Moscow, interviewed by Martin Agronsky. The US currently has 25-to-30,000 warheads, the power of the weakest of these being three times the Hiroshima bomb. It does not need a thousand of these to create unimaginable havoc: 10 or 20 of them would cause a major catastrophe anywhere on the globe. We have 7000 tactical nuclear weapons in Europe alone. We keep on building them. Russia keeps on building them. To use them would be suicide because the other nation would respond in kind. They are terribly expensive besides being incredibly dangerous. Even a child can see that it's to the advantage of both sides to limit the things. And that's what we started to do in the first SALT talks. But unless new agreements are reached in SALT II, current restrictions on offensive nuclear weapons terminate next October. No agreement by then—the nuclear arms race begins again. Jimmy Carter says he will do something about it right away.

But will the Pentagon let him? Will his new defense team go along? Civilian authorities are able to order the military-industrial complex (as Ike called it) only so far. There is hardly a more emotional issue to frighten demagogues and honest men, too. Gov. Carter can conceivably save SALT if he fights for it; but his admiration for former defense secretary James Schlesinger—one of the strongest hawks in the government before President Ford fired him—makes one wonder. It will be one of the big early tests after Inauguration Day.

Meanwhile Moscow watches the enigmatic United States. We are a peace-loving country, aren't we? We are also the world's leading arms merchant; we sell to everybody; we supply rival Latin American dictatorships with the wherewithal to fight cozy little border wars; we supplied Turkey and Greece before the invasion of Cyprus; we supply India and Pakistan. We were selling a modest billion dollars worth in 1970 but we have boosted this up to a noteworthy $13 billion in 1976. Think of the profits; the oil exporters take their pay in arms to prepare for regional fighting, particularly in the Middle East. Our best customer is Iran which is watching its neighbor, Iraq (allied to Moscow). Saudi Arabia is our second biggest customer. The oil in your gas tank is very likely helping to spread sophisticated F-14 fighter jets, Spruance-class destroyers and nuclear-capable Lance missiles.

Is there just a chance, do you suppose, that Moscow sees a touch of hypocrisy in peace-loving America? Naturally if we sell sophisticated arms we have to send technicians to show well-meaning but naïve natives how they work. Moscow may take a gloomy view of all these Americans abroad. Our trade often tends to support authoritarian governments, too, like the one in Iran where the secret police have the habit of torturing dissidents.

President Ford vetoed a 1976 bill to let Congress know more about these arms exports. Jimmy Carter criticized the sales in his presidential campaign. If elected, he pledged that he would work with our allies and the Soviet Union "to reduce the commerce in weapons of war." The Kremlin is waiting to hear from him on that, too.

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Not So Friendly Saudis

When he arrived in Qatar to help OPEC rig its oil prices last month, Saudi oil minister Zaki Yamani was still on the side of the "world forces of liberation." That's how some OPEC members refer to themselves. But when Yamani walked out of the conference two days later and went home, he became a goat. In the eyes of his colleagues, he had become a sinister force. Iran's official Rastakhiz Party (the only one) declared that, "The Third World and all progressive nations everywhere are angry and detest Sheikh Yamani for having sold the real interests of his country and OPEC to imperialism." Iraq's oil minister—speaking for the only party in his country—said that Saudi Arabia had been unmasked as a "defeatist and compromising reactionary."

What provoked this fury? A modest change in Saudi tactics. Sheikh Yamani and the Saudis declined to join the rest of OPEC in raising world oil prices from about $11.50 a barrel to $12.70 a barrel. Instead of supporting the 11 who voted to raise prices by 10 percent now and by another five percent on July 1, Yamani decided to raise them by five percent now and leave the July increase to be set later. Although this division was widely interpreted—even by Yamani's colleagues—as a Christmas present from the Saudis to the United States, it was not. Yamani himself made this clear when he told reporters: "Don't be too happy in the West. . .We expect the West to appreciate what we did, especially the United States." The appreciation, he said, should take the form of "progress" in negotiations on Israel's territorial boundaries and in the North-South talks on sharing the wealth of the industrial world with the non-industrial poor countries.

This record suggests that the oil business—particularly in the Middle East—no longer is a business at all. It has become a political enterprise ruled by a council of clever extortionists. It costs between 12 and 30 cents to produce a barrel of oil in the Persian Gulf, and about $12 to buy one. Sometimes the price demanded by OPEC is measured in financial currency; sometimes in political currency. The significance of the split in the council this December is that OPEC is momentarily divided on the question of how to collect its rackrent: shall the payment be made entirely in money, or shall it be made, as the Saudis would like, partly in money and partly in political concessions (that part played largely by Israel). Because their oil reserves are larger than

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anyone else's in OPEC, the Saudis can afford to defy the majority and set the terms as they wish. They have decided it is time for political payments. They await the American response, knowing that if nothing happens before July 1, they can rejoin their brethren in making large cash demands.

American officials realize that Saudi Arabia is using oil as a weapon again to win what cannot be gained by other means. But they are reluctant to speak plainly about it for two reasons: they fear that the US does not have the leverage to force the Saudis to back down; and they fear that angry words only would provoke a more belligerent response from OPEC. It is a timid attitude. Nevertheless, they do understand what is at stake.

Clement Malin, chief of the Federal Energy Administration's international division, said last week that Yamani's message to the West was the most important political move the Saudis have made since they joined in the oil embargo of 1973. Malin said: "They are definitely sending a signal to the United States that the political use of oil is still a major arrow in their quiver. . .They have said, 'Look, over the past couple of years we've been very supportive of your efforts to bring about Middle East peace and stability. We have bankrolled the moderates in Egypt; we have bankrolled the Jordanians; we have encouraged the Syrians in the Lebanon situation. . . .Now it's your turn, United States, to take the next step. . . .Unless we have some real progress in a year or so the moderates will be in real trouble.'" According to Malin, the Saudis are "using the stick once again to get our attention."

The response from the US, if there is one, will be slow in coming; it will appear only after Carter has moved into the White House and made some very difficult decisions. The President-elect to whom Yamani directed his Christmas message gave the correct reply, praising the Saudis for their restraint but telling them in plain terms that his Middle East policy will not be influenced by the ultimatum. It will be months before we know whether Carter will keep this pledge. In the interim, there are some not-so-controversial measures the US can take to see that the opportunity provided by the division in OPEC is not lost.

Malin of the FEA adheres to the traditional view that the government should not interfere directly in the oil market. Giving commands to the companies would bring about an immediate confrontation with OPEC and destroy what little freedom of maneuver the commercial world now permits in the Middle East. It is not clear that the government's policy of keeping itself entirely out of the oilmen's way is the right one, either. Certainly it has done no good in the last three years. But OPEC will be put under new stresses that may benefit consumers.

One of the first signs to watch is the level of oil production in Saudi Arabia. The Saudis have promised to increase the amount of oil they produce, though they will not lower its price. The United States should do everything possible to see that they keep the pledge and should offer to help them overcome any technical obstacles that make it difficult to keep the promise. Saudi production, now at 8.5 million barrels a day, could rise to 12 million barrels a day by late 1977. Combined with the surplus oil stored in company tanks (180 million barrels), this volume of lower-priced oil could displace and weaken other OPEC sources.

The US should also see to it that any Saudi oil that is offered at lower prices is actually made available to be bought and shipped out of the Persian Gulf. No company that wishes to buy the discounted oil should be prevented from doing so by government regulation or by pressure from the giants (Exxon, Socal, Texaco and Mobil) that have a monopoly in Saudi Arabia. The Saudis should not be able to say nine months from now that they offered the oil for sale, but no one took it.

The work begun on government oil reserves should be accelerated. If the US had begun to acquire storage tanks and filled them three years ago, it would have something more than rhetoric to throw into the contest with OPEC today. Also, in purchasing and selling oil for its reserves, the government could become a small but honest competitor with the big companies. One honest dealer can have a powerful influence in a crooked market. The Carter administration must also review and strengthen tax policies that provide an incentive to conserve energy.

It is important, finally, that the US inform the oil-poor developing countries that despite the vicarious pleasure they may find in seeing OPEC punish the West, they are unlikely to share in OPEC's spoils. While OPEC has accumulated a tremendous reserve of wealth since the embargo and price increases of 1973, the poorest countries have tripled their indebtedness to the rest of the world. The terms of trade for these nations are not likely to improve soon. The FEA, in a briefing paper given to US officials abroad, estimates that, "For every five percent oil price rise" the non-OPEC poor nations "would need at least $1.2 billion in additional foreign borrowing to maintain imports and not suffer further losses in consumption and growth." If prices of oil continue to rise, who will lend the poor countries the billions they need just to stay in place on the treadmill?

Two Georgians

Andy Young once said of a woman he had known and worked with in the civil rights movement that she was a Tolstoyan figure. It was an apt observation that might equally have applied to Young himself. But it's a mark of those among us who are more than ordinarily good that they are better able to see others' special virtues than their own.

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We had hoped that Young would be offered—or would hold out for—a post less limited in its potential for concrete achievements than the one he will take up at the United Nations. How different the transition would seem if at last so wise and eloquent an architect of protest—in Dr. King's movement and in anti-war activity—had been named an architect of policy. Many others feel that way, too, because they wanted Young's practical conscience to be a steady and prodding presence within the Carter councils. All the same, the President-elect has taken risks in putting Young at the UN; these risks are not wholly unlike the risks courted by the Kissinger regency when it sent Pat Moynihan to New York: independent spirits are not likely to adjust easily to the hypocritical disciplines of diplomacy.

It's not only Carter who has gambled; Young has as well. He won't be caught out, fronting for policies with which he is not in sympathy, like Adlai Stevenson and Arthur Goldberg: he's less susceptible to the blandishments of the powerful than they were. Young's ordeal will be imposed by his own sympathy for the "Third World." That jurisdiction is big on grievance, some of it legitimate. But its moral authority is nowhere near commensurate with the suffering of the people within its far-flung borders. Among the putatively non-aligned, it's the stuff of casual rhetoric that the West caused this suffering and can easily relieve it. It will fall to Young to interpret America and its allies to these governments and to interpret them to Washington. But their rage is now amply fueled by cynicism, a trait which helps them project their own failings (and crimes) onto others. This only intensifies the distress of the people they rule. That distress is rightly the concern of free and advantaged societies. No one understands better than Young the modern revolution of race and impoverishment, and its aspirations. Having agreed to forgo Washington for New York, Andrew Young will have to speak harsh truth to the mountebanks and dictators who speak haughtily in the names of those they oppress.

Andy Young may be a Tolstoyan figure, but there is nothing Dostoevskian about his neighbor Griffin Bell, Jimmy Carter's old friend who will be our Attorney General. There isn't much particularly neighborly about Bell either, at least where blacks are concerned. He has been maneuvered into quitting the two rigidly segregated and elite Atlanta clubs to which he belongs. He initially told reporters that he wouldn't want to "lose those initiation fees—upwards of $10,000 . . .because I won't be in Washington forever." Bell apparently doesn't puzzle much over his values; he's content to suspend them while in the public service. His civil rights record as a federal judge has been extensively examined and criticized: it's mixed, which isn't good enough.

Carter seems to want to be surrounded by cronies, but would have it appear that each crony is also the best and/or only person for the job. This particular job—after John Mitchell, it should be altogether clear—is best filled by someone whose political disinterestedness is beyond doubt. That cannot be said of Bell. He has been too involved as a political operative in Georgia and as a confidante of Carter for the independence of Justice from the White House to be taken for granted. That alone represents a step backwards from Edward Levi's meticulously non-partisan administration of the department.

Griffin Bell wrote his court's opinion affirming the decision of the Georgia state assembly not to seat Julian Bond, in view of his publicly stated opinions on the Vietnam war. The Supreme Court unanimously reversed his ruling. Bell wrote that Bond's views were "at war with the national policy of this country. . . " and "a call to action based on race." Therefore, he said, the legislature was free to decide that by opposing the war Bond was violating his oath to support the US Constitution. Is that the kind of sensitivity to civil liberties Jimmy Carter wants in his Attorney General?

White House Watch

Goodbye to All That

Here are some notes on the scene and atmosphere at the White House in the twilight of the Ford administration.

It took the eight weeks after November 2 for people at the White House, from the President down, to get used to the fact of defeat. They were pretty well adjusted to it, through the stage of shock and sadness and preoccupied in most instances with the personal problem of what they do next, when Mr. Ford, his wife and daughter Susan flew to Vail, Colorado, for two weeks of rest and, if delayed snow falls in time on the mountain slopes, skiing for the President, Susan and the two Ford sons who joined them there. The trip from and back to Washington would be Ford's last as President aboard Air Force One. His very last flight on the great jet will be to Monterey, California, for a golf tournament after Jimmy Carter's inauguration.

The last flight, the last everything for him and for most of his people. There were goodbye parties almost

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every night. At a party for staff chief Richard Cheney, another White House assistant was heard to moan, "We're doing so many things for the last time." Excepting the few who were working on the President's last budget and his last State of the Union message, many of them were doing little or nothing and getting mighty tired of it. "This is awful, I can't take it much longer!" a staff assistant in the press office yelled the other evening as he put on his coat and prepared to leave at the abnormally early hour of 5:30 p.m. He said later that he was just kidding and came back to work for another hour, but his remark reflected a common feeling. Even earlier on another recent evening, Press Secretary Ron Nessen was told to get out a statement commending International Monetary Fund support for the ailing British pound and discovered that nobody was around to work on it. The statement was produced in the end and Deputy Press Secretary John Carlson cautioned the staff that there was such a thing as letting down too far.

Most people had their minds on getting jobs. Lawyers and law firms were looking each other over and some attorneys on the staff were planning to found their own firms. The prospects for individuals varied, of course, but on the whole the outlook was far better than it had been for those who left Richard Nixon's White House when or soon after he resigned. Association with Nixon and the Nixon White House was a liability. Association with Gerald Ford and the Ford White House, even for the many who were held over from the Nixon staff, is an asset in the private job market and in the very limited market among Republican senators, congressmen, and the minority staffs of congressional committees. Most of the assistants at "professional" levels have had offers or at least some indications of interest in hiring them.

Despite the repeated claims since 1969 that the practice of staffing the White House with detailees from career services and leaving them on their parent payrolls has been stopped, a surprising number of Ford assistants (27 of 45 "professionals" on the NSC staff, for instance) are in that situation and can return to the military, the Foreign Service and similar havens. The White House secretaries who do more than any other category of employees to keep the place ticking are in a peculiar difficulty. The salaries of all but the most junior of them range from $16,000 to $22,000 a year and a few get up to $25,000. It's a pay level that tends to price them out of the private job market and to a lesser extent out of the secretarial market in Congress. Six or so of the veterans among them have been asked to stay on at the Carter White House, to give a little continuity, but they are the exceptions.

The retirement staff that federal law allows former Presidents will provide temporary jobs for some 25 employees at the Ford White House and long-term jobs for six or seven of them. President Ford's military aide, who was army Major Robert Barrett until he resigned from the service on December 16, is organizing and will head the Ford retirement staff. As "executive assistant to Gerald R. Ford," he will have a deputy and eight other people working directly for him. The initial transition staff also will include a press spokesman and two secretaries; a speech writer with a research assistant; three assistants and secretaries handling correspondence; and a staff lawyer with a secretary. Two employees are assigned to "scheduling," an indication that ex-President Ford intends to do a lot of traveling—"bouncing around the country," Barrett puts it—during the first retirement months. It seems munificent. But a staff on that scale is provided only for the first six months of retirement. The staff will be reduced at two-month intervals to about 13 persons by July 21 and finally to six or seven, including Barrett, by September 1. Most of the early staff will have offices in Washington, in two government-owned houses on Jackson Place, a block from the White House and opposite Lafayette Square. By September 1 at the latest, what's left of the retirement staff will have government office space near the Fords' home.

That home probably will be on the outskirts of Palm Springs, California. Barrett looked over a couple of houses that the Fords may choose from (they pay for their home) the week before the President flew to Vail. Barrett also found that there is no federal space, such as a post office or a military facility, in or near Palm Springs that could make room for the retirement offices. This means that if the Fords settle there the General Services Administration must rent offices, build something, or perhaps install the kind of prefabricated structure that Richard Nixon has and uses close by his San Clemente estate. At this writing one must say "if" the Fords settle in the Palm Springs area. Barrett said on December 16 that one of the luxury enclaves on the outskirts of Palm Springs is almost but not quite certain to be the Fords' retirement base. It was still possible, though, that they'd go somewhere else, possibly farther north in California, even—a remote possibility—in Florida, if "a really great deal" turned up. By that he evidently meant a suitable house and grounds for sale at a bargain price. It was evident that the Fords of Michigan were not about to go back to Michigan.

John Osborne

Staff Changes

With this issue, Michael Kinsley joins *The New Republic* as managing editor. Kinsley is a former managing editor of *The Washington Monthly*. His book *Outer Space and Inner Sanctums*, written for Ralph Nader, was published last year by John Wiley & Sons.

Also with this issue Eliot Marshall, who has been with *The New Republic* since 1970, becomes a senior editor.

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Zbigniew Kazimierz Brzezinski

Born to Skim

Television cameras always have had a salubrious effect on him. His long cheeks flush, the blue eyes dart, and there is a palpable self-assurance. When Columbia ventured to offer lectures over New York's commercial channels in 1962, it was young professor Brzezinski who eagerly gave the maiden performance, an instruction on international communism that even *Variety* found "engrossing." The effect was still there, perhaps sharper, in defeat. One remembers Brzezinski at the Leamington Hotel in Minneapolis the morning after the 1968 election, when he had lost by a mere half-million votes the chance to be Hubert Humphrey's Kissinger. Sullen and slack, he suddenly came alive and throbbing when the candidate (and the cameras) came round for a public handshake and farewell. In many ways he is the ideal talk show guest, quick and smooth and sure. Those qualities can seem to transform fairly simple ideas into impressive insight. And since the attributes of the talk show are depressingly similar to those of presidential briefings or meetings of the National Security Council, at the outset at least Zbigniew Brzezinski as White House NSC assistant probably is going to dominate the second-hand regime Jimmy Carter has resurrected to run his foreign policy.

The job he fills may or may not be the most powerful one in foreign policy; but it certainly is the most crucial. In the hands of a tentative or lesser man, a McGeorge Bundy or a Walt Rostow, the NSC staff is one more barony in the fractious feudalism of foreign affairs bureaucracies; its memorandum is just one more, albeit the last one, on top of a pile that offers the President either a pre-shrunken consensus or a welter of institutional interests. The co-optation usually is fatal to presidential authority. It is almost certainly fatal to a coherent foreign policy. No other agency is able to command or police the self-preservative drives of the CIA, the Foreign Service, the Joint Chiefs or the various economic powers in and out of government that carve up our international relations. No other office can be free enough of the bloat and bickering of larger bureaucracies to give a President terse, credible advice beyond the worn orthodoxies.

The unique authority of the NSC job is there again for the grabbing in a new Carter administration. Whether the holder of this job becomes an accomplice in the old drift or the author of genuine reform will depend very much on the inner depth of Zbigniew Brzezinski.

The similarities to Kissinger—their accents, their academic background—stop at the surface. Kissinger was the GI son of a refugee schoolteacher. Brzezinski went to private Catholic schools in Canada; his father was an aristocratic Polish diplomat who had served the pre-war Pilsudski dictatorship and helped Jews (like the Kissingers) escape Europe. The Nazi invasion and then the Communist takeover made the Brzezinski family permanent exiles in Montreal. After first-class honors at McGill, Brzezinski, like Kissinger, began a brilliant graduate career at Harvard. But unlike Kissinger, he missed the coveted prize of tenure. Obviously bright, ambitious and self-assured, writing with the cold-war vogue on Soviet affairs, enjoying the formidable patronage of Harvard scholars like Merle Fainsod and Carl Friedrich, he could not escape—then as later—underlying doubts about the sheer depth and weight of his work, however prolific. In any case, there is an almost frenetic quality about his career after he left Cambridge in 1960. Swiftly given tenure at Columbia, he plunged into the club politics of the Democratic foreign policy establishment, writing for a wider audience in popular magazines, cultivating television appearances like the Columbia lectures, and—not least—supporting the Johnson administration in the early debates over Vietnam. In 1965 he argued with McGeorge Bundy against Hans Morgenthau and others that the war was necessary, if only to discourage doctrinal belligerence by the Chinese in their dispute with the Russians. A year later, when most foreign affairs scholars were tilting away from Washington, Brzezinski took leave from Columbia to work on the Policy Planning Council.

Brzezinski's role in Washington from 1966 through 1968, his sole government experience beyond the usual academic consultancies, was both more and less than most accounts made of it. His best advertised accomplishment, an LBJ speech on East-West détente, was only a summary of ideas already long-advocated within the government by Dean Acheson (then a special consultant on NATO) and George Ball. As usual in such careers, the decisive events were largely invisible: his bureaucratic discretion and silence on Vietnam at the height of the war's atrocities under the Democrats, which set him up as Humphrey's principal academic adviser in 1968; and his tie to Policy Planning Director Henry Owen. Years later, as a bureaucrat-in-exile at Brookings, Owen provided Brzezinski his connection with Jimmy Carter. What was more apparent was the contrast in style between Brzezinski-in-government and Brzezinski-in-academia. Out of government a voluble academic, Brzezinski is remembered by many in his LBJ period as cautious and even self-effacing. By the autumn of 1968 he had come to see the war as politically untenable; he even helped draft a Humphrey speech proposing de-escalation. Nevertheless, he stood carefully apart from the fatal struggle within the Humphrey camp on the war issue.

During the Nixon years there were more books, more articles and television appearances (now in tactical opposition), and more quiet positioning for the establishment sweepstakes. The real plum, however,

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was of his own making. Having written a book in praise of the multinational corporation, recommending closer cooperation between the businesses and governments of the US, Western Europe and Japan, Brzezinski in 1973 became director of the Trilateral Commission, a corporate foreign policy club spawned by his concept and David Rockefeller's money. The Commission was in most respects a natural extension of his later writings and politics at the Council on Foreign Relations and elsewhere. Its unusual virtue was to cement his close relations with one of the more obscure members of the commission, the ambitious and mercantile-minded governor of Georgia, who apparently was in proper awe of foreign policy expertise. Carter's NSC is a virtual reunion of Trilateral Commission members, including Cyrus Vance and Michael Blumenthal as well as Brzezinski.

In five books of his own and two more as major coauthor, in a fat file of articles and commentaries, Brzezinski shows himself to be adept at that prodigal, often exhausting use of language that frequently passes for scholarly achievement. Yet for all its size, there is something inescapably shapeless about the total product. The early scholarship on Soviet affairs will stand no comparison with his Harvard rival, Adam Ulam, or his sponsor Fainsod. Awaiting almost every book was a timely irrelevance, a shallowness and obsolescence obscured in the popular reception only because, as always, journalism and government lag so consistently behind the realities of foreign affairs. Thus he wrote *The Permanent Purge* in the early 1950s precisely when the shape of Soviet totalitarianism was taking a different, more complex, and in a sense more sinister form. He wrote about the importance of ideology in Eastern Europe in the late '50s, at a moment when economic and bureaucratic influences were already overtaking postwar Communist politics. So too he advocated a simplistic European reunification as De Gaulle, East European nationalism, and the US-Soviet strategic arms standoff made partition the dominant reality of the post-war world. The most embarrassing item in the collected Brzezinski, however, is his 1964 book with Harvard collaborator (and now possible NSC aide) Samuel Huntington on the "convergence" of American and Soviet societies, a verbose argument belied by nearly every major development since its publication in the politics and culture and economics of both countries. What is so striking now about his work is not so much the misconceptions as the conscious, ceaseless reach for novelty, the seeming search for a new vogue, the *use* of writing less for ideas than for attention.

Nowhere was the fashion-mongering more evident than in *Between Two Ages*, the book that launched the Trilateral Commission. Inventing the soon-to-be-forgotten term "technetronic," his thesis rested on two basic ideas, neither original—that computers and other technology were spawning rapid, portentous changes, and that the gap between international rich and poor was steadily widening. Brzezinski's remedy, prescribed at great length, was the benign imperium of the multinational corporation, lavishly spreading development among the "international basket cases" (a phrase he borrowed from Kissinger, apparently without embarrassment), and assuring world stability, not to mention dividends. Like the bulk of his work, Brzezinski's "technetronics" propelled him further up the establishment ladder. The idea was less workable as social or political theory. The society he saw increasingly imprisoned by software actually was undergoing a gradual revolution of individual mores and political awareness that will almost certainly change radically the course of American politics and economics in the next decade. And although the power of the multinational corporation remains enormous—witness its adherents around the NSC table with Brzezinski—that too is under mounting challenge in the United States and abroad. Brzezinski in his Manhattan office saw his own country no more clearly in the 1970s than he earlier saw the Soviet Union and Europe. His mind has skimmed the surface of politics, much as Carter has skimmed the surface of talent in taking him

Unfortunately, Brzezinski will now be looking out with the same flawed perception from the West Wing of the White House, with vastly greater power than he has ever wielded as an ideologue of the Establishment. Despite his shallowness, it seems certain that he will be the most resonant voice in the new government. Vance and Brown are colorless men of routine and institutional advocacy. Blumenthal is a shrewd operator who probably will not challenge Brzezinski outright on international economics until the domestic economy is under better control.

Brzezinski's problem is that he is not even close to being Henry Kissinger. At root Kissinger was not an analyst of international politics, but rather of the politics of American foreign policy. He understood with rare clarity that diplomacy lay not in social theory, but in the distinctly unheroic mastery of budgets, bureaucracies, and personal vulnerabilities. Kissinger built and sustained his power on the chronic mediocrity of his government and his colleagues. Now Kissinger's reputation will coast on the mediocrity of his successors, Vance and Brzezinski. The glib, well-advertised new man at the National Security Council comes with no evidence of truly understanding what happens either inside Washington or in the world at large.

He will endure like all the rest of them, though, because of the unknowing man at the top. Brzezinski is here, intellectual baggage so dazzling and so little examined, because Jimmy Carter is still not secure on this dangerous ground. Brzezinski should beware; even provincial Presidents learn fast.

Suetonius

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Opting for Go-Along Leadership

Why Hubert Will Lose

by Ken Bode

On January 4, the 62 Democratic members of the US Senate will file into caucus, pick up secret ballots and choose a new majority leader to succeed Mike Mansfield who is retiring after a record 16 years in the job. The contest a few weeks ago in the House opened with four contestants; Jim Wright, an engaging Texas moderate, needed three rounds to defeat his more liberal and personally pugnacious rival, Phil Burton of California. By contrast the Senate contest will be a two-man, one-ballot showdown between Hubert Humphrey and the present majority whip, Robert Byrd.

Some senators have declared that the importance of their impending decision is exaggerated. They say that while there are obvious differences in the politics and the styles of the two men, the truth is that reforms in Senate procedure, the new breed of younger, more independent members and Mansfield's own gentle, impartial leadership have ended for all time the ability of, say, a Lyndon Johnson to turn the majority leader post into an overpowering barony.

But even though the power of the job is diminished—particularly now that the majority party also controls the presidency—the man chosen next month still will hold considerable sway over the day-to-day operations of the Senate, and he will have no small impact on the fate of Jimmy Carter's legislative program. He presides over the Democratic conference, for example, and is the most important point of liaison between the Senate and the White House. He also has ample access to the media as the most visible national spokesman for the congressional majority. As chairman of the Policy Committee, he directs the party's legislative strategy: whether a civil rights bill is sent to the friendly Commerce Committee, for example, or to Jim Eastland's Judiciary Committee; or whether bills ever reach the floor for a vote, and if so, under favorable or unfavorable circumstances. As chairman of the Steering Committee, or committee on committees, he has an important voice, should he choose to exercise it, in determining assignments to legislative and policy committees, a valuable asset during leadership contests. He also controls appointments to select committees such as the Ervin Committee to investigate Watergate, and the Church Committee to examine abuses in the intelligence field.

When the votes are counted, Hubert Humphrey will lose and Robert Byrd will hold these powers. The only issue that remains to be settled is the size of his majority. Byrd's new post will be the crowning achievement of a slow, patient rise through his party's leadership. It began when he defeated liberal Joe Clark (Pa.) for Conference Secretary in 1967, then continued when he beat liberal Ted Kennedy for party whip in 1971. The coalition that will choose Byrd over Humphrey extends across the entire spectrum of Democrats, which now includes a preponderance of senators who must be classified as progressives. The way Robert Byrd has fashioned his all-but-certain victory tells something about how strongly traditional factors still influence senators. The story also indicates that the Young-Turk-vs-Old-Guard mood of the last Congress has begun to subside.

Byrd's core of support consists of the remains of the conservative Democratic coalition: the older, solid-South senators, Sparkman of Alabama, Long of Louisiana, McClellan of Arkansas, Stennis and probably Eastland of Mississippi and Talmadge of Georgia—all committee chairmen, all bitter-enders on civil rights, and all of whom have voted together on every leadership contest over the last decade. "For this bunch, there is no choice," says one veteran observer of Capitol Hill politics. "Bobby Byrd was with them when." To this group he adds the rest of the senators from the old South, and the border states. These gentlemen are less long of tooth, perhaps, a bit more moderate in most respects. But most find Byrd an ideological compatriot. There are 21 Democrats who fit in this category, and Byrd will get all but a couple of their votes.

Then, by all accounts Byrd has done his job well as whip, and the tradition in the Senate is to promote unless there is a good reason for not doing so. Claiborne Pell, whose voting record is very close to that of Hubert Humphrey, has explained his support for Byrd by saying, "My thought was that by working for it, by apprenticeship, by the normal course of advancement, he deserves it."

Robert Byrd has been a perfect assistant to Mike Mansfield, a whip who shares his mentor's philosophy that leaders exist to serve the needs of other members. He executes the mundane daily chores—arranging transportation to airports, arranging "pairs" when roll calls come at an inconvenient time. Russell Long once

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described the job as "just a grueling, day-to-day thankless, time-consuming job of being around." Even those who oppose his present ambitions concede that Byrd has done the whip's job well. "He's a great facilitator for every senator on the floor," says one. "No question about it, he keeps the Senate on track."

Byrd's performance is glowing by comparison, for he came to the job on the heels of two of the worst whips in memory. Both Russell Long (1965-69) and Ted Kennedy (1969-71) were primarily interested in things other than controlling the clock on matters of legislative routine or protecting fellow senators on an inconvenient vote.

For some senators, Byrd's competence and attention to detail have neutralized the ideological gap and provided a plausible, not to say necessary, rationale for voting against Hubert Humphrey, a man whose views are closer to their own than are those of Robert Byrd of West Virginia. Byrd calls himself a "moderate-conservative." He was a constant supporter of the war in Vietnam and is a reliable pro-Pentagon vote for even the most controversial items—the ABM, F-111 and so forth. On public works, poverty and federal health and safety programs he runs a middle course; likewise regarding the environment, except that he is hard-line pro-strip-mining. His lifetime ADA rating is 43, compared to 94 for Hubert Humphrey. Byrd's most important shortfall is his persistent anti-civil-rights record (see page 11). On the other hand, his voting record is generally pro-labor.

The oft-expressed view is that Robert Byrd is a technician. "He makes the trains run on time, he knows how to make this institution work," says Gary Hart, one of the few names remaining on nearly everyone's list of senators still publicly and privately uncommitted in the majority leader contest. For Hart, as for other liberal senators who have already announced for Byrd—Stevenson, Pell, Ribicoff, Glenn, Abourezk—ideology is not a factor. Inside considerations are more important. For some, in fact, a strong, persistent ideological commitment may be a liability. Stevenson: "It seems to me that what the Senate needs more than anything else is management and a philosophically neutral climate." Ideology may be passed over in determining the votes of many liberals, but there is no doubting that it explains the inner core of Byrd's support.

For those who promote Humphrey's candidacy on grounds that the majority leader should actually serve as a spokesman for his party in the Senate, the second part of Sen. Stevenson's remark about philosophical neutrality is illuminating. Even as leader of the *out*-party, Mike Mansfield never presumed to be the spokesman for the majority in the Senate. Normally he made one strong, liberal, partisan speech to the caucus each year—on the war, say, or the economy—but never released those remarks publicly. His stewardship was an entirely administrative operation with no ideological component. Robert Byrd's comment that a majority leader must set his personal views aside fits that prescription rather well and is reassuring to a number of senators. By contrast, imagine Hubert Humphrey setting his personal views aside. The Mansfield regimen is what senators are used to; it seems to be what they want, and what they assume Byrd will deliver. Pell: "The role of majority leader is that of interpreting the wishes of the whole Senate." Ribicoff: "When it comes to a spokesman and you have a Democratic President, he's the spokesman for the Democratic party, not the majority leader."

Humphrey backers, who know their man is not tailored in that image, advance an alternative point of view. After a decade of domination by the executive branch, Congress has only just begun to reassert its independence through internal reforms, through the War Powers Act, centralized budget procedures, the revocation of presidential emergency powers, and the like. It is a start, but a shaky one; leadership decisions for the next Congress will indicate further progress or a pause, and the selection of Wright in the House is an ominous sign. With an enlarged majority, a return to the iron-clad, arm-twisting style of Lyndon Johnson is not needed. But some Nixon-Ford veto overrides were lost through slippage in Democratic ranks under Mansfield. Indeed it is possible that the new President may require a check from within his own party at some time in the upcoming years. Voting for Byrd, say his opponents, is like voting for Wright. Both are conscious options for "go along" leadership.

John Glenn made his decision, based on just such considerations, on election day. If Ford had won, says a Glenn spokesman, "the type of person needed would have been an articulate, well known, national spokesman for the party, the kind of person who could be the leader of the loyal opposition in fact as well as image, a symbolic representative of the party as well as a strong legislative tactician. Since Carter won, the number-one emphasis has to be on a man who will, in a low profile way . . . steer the administration's legislation through the Senate." Glenn is voting for Byrd. Glenn and the others who offer this rationale should keep in mind Mike Mansfield's commentary on his own stewardship. "Not standing up to the President, particularly when it was a President of my own party, is the thing I regret most," Mansfield says.

Another advantage for Robert Byrd in this contest is the office he presently holds. Byrd has not been loath to use it to accumulate IOUs and issue reminders to those for whom he has performed small services. No senator on the majority side has been spared notes from Byrd attesting that he was "happy to do that little errand," with the gently implied obligation. Phone inquiries to the whip office are answered, "Hello, chief," or "Yes, boss." Whip notices are signed off, "Your old Plebian friend." It is a truckling, time-serving mien, profitable

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Byrd's Record on Race

Hubert Humphrey's greatest accomplishment as Senate Whip during the early 1960s was as floor manager for the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He led the struggle to break the Southern filibuster and enact the most important civil rights bill since Reconstruction. Jimmy Carter called the Civil Rights Act the best thing that happened to the South in his lifetime. Robert Byrd was one of a handful of non-deep South Democrats who helped the filibuster and voted against the bill.

To Byrd, the 1964 Act was a threat to "basic principles of our freedom." His opposition arose from "deep conscientious convictions." The fair employment section, he said, would often force companies to hire "the nonwhite applicant in preference to the white widow." The provisions authorizing Justice Department action against segregated hotels and restaurants would be used by "outside agitators and troublemakers." He saw the law as an unconstitutional infringement on property rights. One of the "practical reasons" he opposed the law, he said, was the fear of violence and robbery by black men if "a white woman would be forced to rent rooms to nonwhite persons."

Byrd assailed the "well-meaning church leaders" supporting the bill and argued that the Bible favored segregation. Even God, he claimed, had segregated Heaven by establishing separate levels of "angels and authorities and powers."

His speech included a direct attack on the 1954 Supreme Court school desegregation decision. He also congratulated Bull Connor and his police force on the handling of the 1963 Birmingham demonstrations which saw the infamous beatings of hymn-singing marchers.

The next year Byrd fought against the Voting Rights Act, the bill that finally enfranchised blacks in the deep South and made possible the emergence of moderate Democrats like Jimmy Carter. His racial attitudes were also evident in his 1965 opposition to immigration reform. He warned that the national character would be endangered by letting in people from "Jamaica, Trinidad, Indonesia, India, Nigeria, etc."

Byrd denounced President Johnson's fair housing bill as a "monstrously shocking" idea which "does violence" to property rights. Shortly before the law was enacted, in 1968, he said it would mean that "all citizens. . .will have surrendered a vast portion of their liberty and their freedom."

Shortly before Martin Luther King was assassinated, Byrd denounced him as a "self-seeking rabble rouser" who ran from trouble like a "scared rabbit." Two weeks after the murder he attacked those eulogizing King and suggested that the black leader was to blame for the riots after his death.

Byrd's racial attitude is evident from his record during Senate confirmation of Supreme Court nominees. He was the only non-Southerner to vote against Thurgood Marshall, the first black Supreme Court justice. He later accused the Warren Court of a "mad and rampant course toward a total perversion not only of its historic function but also of the . . . US Constitution."

Byrd refused to join other Democrats (and some Republicans) in opposing President Nixon's nominations of Clement Haynsworth, Jr. and G. Harrold Carswell for the Supreme Court. Byrd said he hoped Haynsworth agreed with his own view that integration should be "purely voluntary." During the 1970 Carswell battle he praised Nixon's efforts to "restructure the Supreme Court and reverse its activist course."

In 1971 Nixon reportedly decided to name Byrd himself to the Court, but changed his mind (after the Haynsworth and Carswell defeats) when his Attorney General reported little enthusiasm from the American Bar Association.

Byrd's more recent civil rights record is less extreme but still very conservative. When the Voting Rights Act was renewed in 1970 he was the only non-deep South Democrat to vote against the measure, which several Southerners now supported. He voted against strong Federal enforcement authority to prevent job discrimination, then supported a greatly weakened job bill endorsed by the Nixon administration. By 1975 most Southern senators were supporting renewal of the Voting Rights Act. Byrd joined the 77-12 majority, after voting for some weakening amendments.

Most recent congressional skirmishes in the civil rights area have been over school desegregation. Byrd has been a strong opponent. In 1971 he supported a constitutional amendment to permit resegregation of Southern schools under "freedom of choice." During 1974 he voted for the Gurney amendment, a sweeping measure that would drastically curtail judicial power to desegregate urban schools. (Northern Democrats opposed it by a seven-to-one ratio.) The same year he was one of two Democrats outside the deep South who supported a bill to cripple all HEW activities against sex and race discrimination by denying the agency the right to collect the information necessary for enforcement. During 1975 he won passage of his amendment partially repealing the 1964 Civil Rights Act's prohibition against discrimination in federally assisted programs.

Byrd's record is one of hostility to civil rights, a hostility fueled by racial stereotypes and timeworn segregationist arguments. This posture is not explained by constituency pressure. Byrd comes from a state with a black population of four percent.

Gary Orfield

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indeed over the long run. "If we elect Hubert Humphrey, I'll be working for him. If we elect Bobby Byrd, he'll be working for me," is a commonly repeated summation.

But Byrd's manner does not disguise his purpose. No one doubts that somewhere there has been a careful accounting kept of all the small favors so deferentially offered. "He's an obsequious, quintessential clerk," says one of his detractors in the Senate bureaucracy, "a striving Uriah Heep." We'll never know how many pending due bills Byrd has called in to fashion his victory. Nor is the *quid pro quo* very often obvious. Old-style, up-front pork-barrel politics are out of vogue these days. Going out to campaign for other senators, however, is a more subtle way of incurring debts, one which both Byrd and Humphrey have employed.

Humphrey, who was presumed all along to be a potential Byrd challenger, got a late start. He sat out most of the spring awaiting his party's call to bear its presidential standard, thereby ceding Byrd important time to accumulate early commitments. Major surgery for bladder cancer in the autumn was a further setback, leaving his health a question mark for several weeks. But following the election, Humphrey was on his feet with a quicker-than-expected recovery; in fact, his health is probably a factor in the race only insofar as it cost him time and permitted Byrd to solidify fence-sitters while his illness was in the newspapers.

Election day was generally counted as a setback to the present majority whip's ambitions for advancement. Of the five Democratic incumbents who lost, Hartke (Ind.), Moss (Utah), Montoya (N. Mex.), McGee (Wyo.) and Tunney (Calif.), Byrd was counting all but Tunney firmly in his column. The 10 incoming freshmen were thought to be an ideological mix that gave Humphrey an even chance to gain more ground, so there were reports that Humphrey was off dead center, and that Ted Kennedy and Dick Clark of Iowa were going to take over active management of his campaign—first to solidify his base among liberals, then to begin on the newcomers. During this time, there was a third candidate in the race, Fritz Hollings of South Carolina, who was known to be far behind and would surely drop out before the first ballot or be dropped after it.

Humphrey, whose reputation nationally far exceeds his influence in the Senate, has played a classic outsider's game in attempting to overtake his rival. His strategy has been to rely on the "downtown bureaucracies": the national media (whose attention he can always command), the Capitol Hill press corps, the special interests—labor, farm, welfare, civil liberties and especially civil rights groups whose goals his career has virtually embodied over the years—and liberal organizations like Americans for Democratic Action.

Even with complete unanimity and invasionary force levels among these groups, it is almost impossible to win a congressional leadership fight from the outside. In this case, there is neither unanimity nor much activity. Humphrey has been able to pick up endorsements from much of the liberal establishment press (*The New York Times, New York Post, Boston Globe, The New Republic*), and there have been local editorials all over the country calling upon senators to support him over Byrd. But most of the special interests have been slow to arouse themselves from a post-election stupor. They have worried primarily about Jimmy Carter's cabinet. Some quietly have begun to line up behind Byrd. Humphrey has the support of some liberal trade unions like the UAW; the State, County and Municipal Employees; and the Communications Workers. But AFL-CIO President George Meany and his deputy Al Barkan, who heads the federation's wealthy political arm, have released their influential chief lobbyist, Andy Biemiller, to work for Byrd. They have told friends and senators alike, "We're neutral, but neutral for Byrd." Despite Humphrey's three decades of service to trade unions, Meany labor is against him on the assumption that Byrd will be better able to deliver conservative votes on labor legislation.

Humphrey's campaign has lagged for other reasons. Both inside and outside the Senate, he suffers from contradictions in his own image. You never know which Hubert you are getting, it is said: the courageous, outspoken Hubert of 1948 or Hubert the loyalist of 1968. For example, Humphrey has not communicated strong support to senators interested in continued reform of the committee system and filibuster rules—Abourezk, Stevenson, Durkin and Hart. Byrd is gathering many of these votes. Also, Humphrey's supporters have flagged. Dick Clark made an extended trip to Africa and was temporarily caught up in a boomlet to make him Secretary of State. Ted Kennedy, for whom it is often said Humphrey is proxy in a grudge rerun of his 1971 loss to Byrd, has made some calls; but he also has taken time off for a trip to Greece and Italy—an indication, perhaps, that there just aren't that many calls left to make.

More important, as in a poker game, when the chips begin to accumulate in front of one player, the piles just seem to get higher. The late momentum is very much with Robert Byrd, and it will not subside. Humphrey's original list has been decimated. Many counted as "favorable" or "undecided"—Abourezk, DiConcini, Melcher, Sasser, Huddleston—have begun to slip to Byrd. More will do so shortly. The principal argument used by Byrd in seeking support today is the large number of commitments he already has. That's a very good sign that it's over. Byrd will win. No freshman wants to start out on the wrong side of a majority leader he may have to live with for most of his career. Any incoming senator taking a sounding around Washington these days will hear the same thing—that Robert Byrd will have a great deal to do with who fills those open slots on the Steering Committee, the Policy Committee, Foreign Relations, Appropriations,

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Judiciary, and so forth. Momentum makes all the difference at the end. It cancels out old debts. The day before he entered the hospital for bladder surgery, Hubert Humphrey campaigned in Nebraska for Edward Zorinsky; Zorinsky will be for Byrd.

Humphrey's supporters have accommodated Byrd's cause by running up their own distress flags, another sign of weakness. "It's the last few minutes and we're two touchdowns behind," said one spokesman. Humphrey himself has conceded and all but documented to *The Washington Post* that he lost the support of the AFL-CIO. For senators up for re-election in 1978, that was an item of interest.

It all helps Byrd take up the slack, makes it possible for him to mount a strong finish. When Fritz Hollings dropped out of the contest, Humphrey found it impossible to consolidate the gains he anticipated among Hollings' handful of supporters. One incoming freshman reports a long-distance telephone call from Byrd that indicates the confidence and the character of Byrd's campaign finish: "This is going down to the wire and I need to know what you're going to be able to do for me so that I, in turn, can decide what I'm going to be able to do for you. I need your answer and I need it by tomorrow afternoon."

Which one does Jimmy Carter want? The new President and his aides have remained scrupulously neutral, but that question is on the minds of many senators. Moderate-conservative Southerners are very much in vogue these days. Most senators have concluded, with John Glenn, that the real winner on election day was Robert Byrd.

Robert Byrd will win, Hubert Humphrey will lose, and that may be fine with Jimmy Carter. But in the aftermath of this contest, there are some misconceptions strewn about. Carter may have forgotten, for example, that strong leadership in the Senate may indeed be necessary, especially with a large, loose Democratic majority and particularly if he is going to pick up the votes of those senators at the edge who think his programs go too far, or not quite far enough. Mr. Carter may also have forgotten how effective Humphrey was as whip on the Civil Rights Bill back in 1964, or how excoriating he might be as an opponent on executive reorganization or on confirmation of an attorney general nominee who held memberships in restrictive clubs. And for those senators who merely want a continuation of Mike Mansfield's ideologically neutral style of leadership, who want a continuation of reform and a genuinely open forum, who want the Senate to continue to prosper as an institution, and who intend to mark their secret ballots for Robert Byrd on those grounds: well, they may be getting a winner, but they might also find out later that they've badly misread their man, that beneath the Robert Byrd of 1976 there still lurks the Robert Byrd of 1956.

Carter's Foreign Policy Team

Who's in Charge Here?

by Tad Szulc

Now that Jimmy Carter has filled all of his top positions, it seems clear that two men will make American foreign policy for the next four years: Zbigniew Brzezinski as National Security Adviser and W. Michael Blumenthal as Treasury Secretary.

Cyrus R. Vance as Secretary of State and Harold Brown as Secretary of Defense will act primarily as respected advisers and administrators rather than conceptual policy thinkers. On the other hand Andrew Young, as permanent representative to the United Nations, will have a more creative role in policy making than those who disparage this job realize.

These predictions, if correct, mean that these gentlemen will play roles substantially different from those of their predecessors. There are two reasons why I think this is the case: one is personal, the other relates to new policy trends.

The most important development is Carter's recognition that Treasury must have a major vote in US foreign policy. For the first time in postwar years the US will have a comprehensive foreign *economic* policy, a long overdue development and one of vital importance at this juncture of world events. In recent years, the dissension between Henry Kissinger at State and William Simon at the Treasury had seriously damaged the conduct of foreign relations in the economic realm. Secretary-designate Blumenthal has a rich background in international economics in particular and foreign affairs in general. He has a clear understanding with Carter and other members of the new team that he will

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have an active foreign policy role.

Last month when Saudi Arabia formally declared that its continued oil pricing restraint was tied to its hopes for advances in Middle East diplomacy, this underscored dramatically the fact that world politics and economics are, indeed, indivisible. Carter and his associates are not prepared to accept this linkage in the manner contemplated by the Saudis. Nevertheless the new administration must come up with a consistent approach to the oil problem, something that the outgoing Republicans have failed to do.

The catastrophic economic situation in Western Europe, including steady institutional deterioration within the European Economic Community, obviously is tied directly to European politics. The US, Western Europe and Japan must make major decisions in the monetary and trade fields during 1977, in order to forestall what could be an immensely dangerous situation.

Brzezinski, who organized the Trilateral Commission to deal with economic-political relations among the US, Western Europe and Japan, is known to feel as strongly as Blumenthal that the Western European economic situation should be on top of the Carter administration's foreign policy agenda.

Finally, there is the growing issue of the relationship between the industrialized countries and the "Third World. Here as elsewhere, US policy no longer can be divided into separate economic and political compartments.

Both Brzezinski and Blumenthal believe that the economics situation is the most important long-range crisis now facing the world, with profound ramifications in all other aspects of foreign policy. Consequently, the Carter administration will deploy its creative powers on the field of economic policy. Two other people are likely to have active voices in foreign economic policymaking. One is Juanita M. Kreps, the new Secretary of Commerce. The other is the person—unnamed as of this writing—whom Vance and Carter will select as under secretary of state for economic affairs.

Economics aside, the Carter administration will face serious foreign policy problems of a purely political and strategic nature. These include the SALT negotiations, relations with China and the ever-intractible Middle East. In all these areas, it is my impression that Brzezinski will have the greatest influence with President Carter. Brzezinski is personally close to Jimmy Carter, which Cyrus Vance is not. In addition, Brzezinski is a more original thinker than Vance is.

Carter and Brzezinski will not treat Vance the way Nixon and Kissinger treated William Rogers when he was Secretary of State. For one thing, Brzezinski does not see himself as a globe-trotting negotiator. Vance has a reputation as a skilled negotiator, although it is one his critics dispute. Brzezinski and Carter intend to let Vance play the role of the new administration's chief negotiator.

Brzezinski holds strong personal opinions on a variety of foreign policy issues. He does not intend merely "to facilitate the process of decision-making," as he put it the day his appointment was announced. I believe he will play a significant creative role in foreign policy from the outset.

One subject on which Brzezinski is known to hold strong opinions is détente. Carter had no sooner introduced him to the press last month in Plains than he expressed his dissatisfaction with the 1974 preliminary SALT agreement between President Ford and Chairman Brezhnev. The proposed ceilings for the number of strategic offensive weapons were "too high," he declared. This statement reflects Brzezinski's belief, and Carter's, that Presidents Nixon and Ford were too permissive toward the Soviet Union in the SALT negotiations. The Carter administration is likely to evolve a tougher negotiating stance. In this area, however, differences may develop between Brzezinski and Brown; the latter is a SALT expert.

More generally, Carter and his entire foreign policy team (including Brown, the so-called "compromise" choice for defense) seem much more skeptical about the potential benefits of détente than their counterparts under Nixon and Ford. An early opportunity to take a tougher stance will be the 1977 Belgrade summit, the follow-up to the 1975 Helsinki European Security Conference. Brzezinski believes that most of the Communist countries have not fully lived up to their Helsinki commitments, especially in the areas of human rights and East-West exchanges.

Naturally, neither Carter nor Brzezinski proposes to liquidate détente. Brzezinski's ideal is a détente without illusions.

Brzezinski and the new Carter foreign policy team are encouraged by the recent moves by Israel, Egypt, Jordan and even Syria which may break the impasse in the Middle East. They are inclined initially to let the process develop on its own, without any new direct American involvement on the Kissinger model. They stand ready to re-enter the diplomatic process, however, if it appears warranted—and especially to prevent an excessive increase in Soviet influence. The same attitude prevails regarding the situation in southern Africa. Indeed Brzezinski and the others aspire to a general reputation for thoughtful and methodical action, and do not intend any initial "100 days" foreign policy offensive.

The regulars at the State Department have been through some lean years lately. Brzezinski does not intend to shut them out of major policy making, as Kissinger did. Nevertheless, he is known to feel that the quality of reporting and analysis in the State Department can stand considerable improvement. Without Kissinger's overwhelming presence, with an administrator at the helm, and with a desire on the part of

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both Vance and Brzezinski for effective coordination, there is a good chance that improvements will occur. This would be in keeping with Carter's announced desire to streamline the presentation of intelligence information by reorganizing the Central Intelligence community. The quality of reporting and analysis coming from Europe will be of special concern.

In sum, what we can expect from the Carter administration is strong foreign policy leadership on the part of the White House, and, as a significant innovation, the full participation of the Treasury Department in national security decision-making.

Britain's Plight

The Lion in Winter

by Robert Samuelson

Following Britain's economic crisis in the newspapers, British or American, you might think that the country is on the verge of spiritual and physical collapse. It isn't. The pubs are packed and cheery. People do not hurl themselves into the Thames whenever the pound drops sharply. The guard still changes—with impressive pomp—at Buckingham Palace. Life proceeds, and even a casual observer cannot help noticing the contrast between the disaster reported in the press and the visible prosperity.

The casual observation is not an illusion. Between 1970 and 1975, the real buying power of the average person in Britain increased about 15 percent, somewhat better than the US experience. Unemployment, astronomical by past British standards, is still only about 5.6 percent—well below that in the United States. None of this means that Britain lacks problems, but that the "crisis" is not quite what it is cracked up to be. The truth is that Britain has been stumbling from one economic "crisis" to another for 20 years. If this is the worst, its essence is more political and psychological than economic. And, in this, Britain mirrors problems afflicting most industrialized nations.

Believe it or not, Britain is now producing almost as much as ever. The economy—the production of goods and services—has not crumbled. Nor can it be called an abysmal social failure. The material standard of living is twice what it was 25 years ago. To that must be added a superstructure of public services (more health care, more education for more people, fatter public pensions) whose value is difficult to measure.

But for Britons this was not enough. Indeed it was taken for granted. The result was a political climate that increasingly lost touch with economic reality. When people assume that government will assure prosperity, they cease to worry about the consequences of unrestrained selfishness. The game is, get as much as you can. In Britain, unions demanded wage increases that wildly exceeded productivity gains. Interest groups and government ministers pushed through public aid programs. In the end, the demands simply overwhelmed the economy's capacity, creating staggering inflation. All societies, democratic and totalitarian, must ultimately abide by basic economic rules: appetite cannot far exceed output. In totalitarian nations, the rules are made to work by force. In democracies, they can work only if there is a reasonable consensus on how the nation's wealth will be divided among its people. In Britain, the consensus and essential self-restraint dissolved.

Now Britain faces the consequences. The question is not whether living standards will be forced down—they almost certainly will—but how gracefully the country will weather the decline. The fundamental economics are not hard to understand. The country imports 25 percent of consumption. To pay for these imports, it must either export, attract investment capital or borrow abroad. Except on rare occasions, imports have always exceeded exports, and the difference has been offset by so-called "invisibles" (earnings on overseas investments and services, such as banking and insurance). But Britain's current account—"visible" exports and imports, plus "invisibles"—has now swung into massive deficit: 3.35 billion pounds in 1974, 1.67 billion pounds in 1975, and more than 1.7 billion pounds in 1976. Bloated oil costs (20 percent of the country's imports in 1974) were part of the problem, but not the whole problem. To pay for

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these imports, Britain borrowed enormous sums of foreign currency from banks (more than $10 billion) and ran down existing reserves.

This borrowing cannot continue forever. So the deficits have to shrink or disappear.Under the existing system of floating exchange rates, the correction ought to occur more or less automatically. The pound depreciates. Imports become more expensive; British exports become less expensive. The British import less, and export more; living standards drop accordingly. That's the theory.

Unfortunately, the theory can work smoothly only if your average worker—or government minister—accepts its cruel logic. And there lies the essence of Britain's current mess. The logic mandates an erosion of workers' purchasing power, and that, in turn, could trigger labor strife and political turmoil. The centerpiece of the Labour government strategy is the "social contract" with the Trades Union Congress, representing about 11 million of the country's 25 million workers. In the current year, wage increases are not supposed to exceed 4.5 percent. In practice, this could mean a five- to six-percent increase in average earnings, including overtime and promotion to better-paying jobs. But inflation is now running at a rate of 13 to 14 percent, and the government's unpleasant job is to force its people to accept this erosion in income.

It would be tempting to blame everything on the five-fold rise in oil prices. This certainly compounded Britain's problems, along with everyone else's. But OPEC did not single-handedly cause Britain's problems. The oil price rise meant that most non-oil nations could not quickly achieve a conventional balance in imports and exports. The oil bill was simply too great to pay. But neither could the oil countries spend all their new wealth. And unless they were willing to bury the surplus, it had to come back to oil-consuming nations—as bank deposits, investments, or loans. Britain should have received a disproportionate share of the surplus oil funds. London, after all, remains a world financial capital. Many oil producers had traditionally invested in pounds. For a while, they maintained the habit.

But now their habits have changed. Their reappraisal reflected an understandable judgment of Britain as a poor economic bet. The ensuing rundown of the so-called sterling balances (foreign investments in pounds) now represents one of the principal selling pressures against the pound. In effect, Britain is paying for its flight from economic reality. Throughout 1974, British unions—living under the benign influence of a Labour government, which came into office in March—went on a wage binge; settlements often averaged 30 percent annually. Meanwhile, the government struggled to hold down unemployment by raising spending. The anti-unemployment policy was understandable and humane. That this was so did not make it work. Together, government and unions pumped up the demand for credit; the Bank of England responded by printing money. If it hadn't, the British economy would have collapsed.

Britain did not arrive at this impasse overnight. The principal mistake—trying to keep living standards improving faster than the nation's underlying economy—has been evident for years. Between 1950 and 1971, Britain's per capita output slipped from fifth in the world to 15th. Britain's loss of competitiveness, without loss of economic appetite, remains the fundamental contradiction. There is no single villain in this story; there are many.

Moralists who believe that people get no better (or worse) than they deserve may find the first villain the most compelling: the alleged phlegmatic, self-satisfied British character. According to stereotype, the American businessman is gung-ho; the German, ever-efficient; the Japanese, fanatical; the Frenchman, devious; and finally, the Brit—either as manager or worker—admired for his manners, but not his drive. At best, his management abilities were mediocre; he wasn't hungry enough to participate in the postwar growth game—to expand sales and capture new markets.

Some would say the same smug insularity has permeated Britain's politics. Thus Britain spent most of the postwar era vainly trying to preserve an imperial past that was rapidly evaporating, rather than preparing realistically for the future. In the '50s, for example, Britain chose not to join the Common Market, because Britain was under the impression it could outdo the rest of Europe in economic competition.

A second view of Britain's trouble is that it became the chief victim of the system of fixed exchange rates that prevailed from the end of World War II until 1971. Under this system, each nation agreed to maintain its currency at a fixed rate of exchange with other currencies. Devaluation (a change in the fixed rate of exchange) was supposed to occur only if there was a fundamental imbalance in the nation's overseas payments. Otherwise, when the short-term supply and demand for a country's currency were out of whack, the country was supposed to buy or sell its own currency in sufficient quantities to maintain the official rate. In the long run, the country was supposed to take domestic actions (which usually meant tighter credit and more restrictive policies) to correct continued currency outflows.

Under this system Britain faced unique political, psychological and economic burdens. Sterling was a reserve currency; this meant that other nations kept their excess international earnings in pounds rather than other, less reliable currencies. For Britain, the role as the world's reserve bank constituted both an asset and a liability. It created flexibility: it meant that nations with a trade surplus with Britain wouldn't necessarily cash in their excess pounds for some other

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currency. The British in effect enjoyed an enormous interest-free loan, which they could use to buy more abroad than it sold. The liability, however, was that Britain had to maintain absolute confidence in the pound's value. Loss of confidence might prompt existing holders to cash in their reserves, triggering a run on the bank. The liability was probably as much psychological and political as economic; devaluing the pound meant breaking faith with the Commonwealth nations (whose assets would be devalued, too) and dishonoring Britain's past. These perceptions weighed especially heavily on the Labour government that came to power in 1964. It wanted to prove itself respectable and responsible by guarding the pound.

The result, in the view of many economists, is that Britain spent most of the late '50s and '60s defending an unrealistic exchange rate: a rate that made exports too expensive, and imports too cheap. That defense forced Britain into a series of "stop-go" economic policies that stunted investment and growth. The slower growth intensified the nation's internal political, social and economic conflicts; the struggle concentrated increasingly on redistributing existing income rather than sharing growing wealth.

Talk about struggle inevitably leads to the next candidate on the villain's list—the unions.

The British labor movement differs sharply from its American counterpart. In some ways, it is vastly more powerful; in other ways, somewhat less. A much larger proportion of the work force is nominally unionized. In contrast to Britain's Trades Union Congress (TUC), which represents 50 percent of the work force, US unions represent only about 25 percent. Moreover, British unions involve themselves more energetically in party politics, with the TUC bankrolling the Labour party. Union rhetoric has always emphasized Socialist ideology and class consciousness more than in America, where materialism—give me *more*—has predominated.

The contrasts do not stop here. British unions tend to be far more fragmented and decentralized than American unions. Whereas most large US firms usually deal with one massive union—the United Auto Workers and the car manufacturers being a typical example—British companies may deal with five or six. Likewise, national leadership has sometimes been weak; local shop stewards often exercise crucial power over local agreements and working conditions. Agreements do not carry (as they do in America) the force of law. Rather, they rest on understanding and trust, two commodities that frequently have been in short supply. This means (again unlike America) that no legal prohibition exists to bar strikes once an agreement has been reached. Taken together, all these factors produce a maddening number of wildcat strikes.

But by objective measures, the unions cannot be blamed for all of Britain's economic problems. Between 1955 and 1964, for example, Britain's strike experience compared quite favorably with many of its major trading partners. Britain lost an annual average of 294 days per 1000 workers, against 336 for France, 703 for West Germany and 1044 for the United States. Nevertheless, poor industrial relations have exacerbated Britain's problems. In the late '60s and early '70s, strikes rose dramatically. The government became directly involved in many of these disputes because key industries—coal, electricity, the railroads and steel—are nationalized. This injects an enormous amount of politics into bargaining and often leads to either capitulation or confrontation. The worst showdown was the miners' strike against the Conservative government of Edward Heath in late 1973 and early 1974 which put the country on a three-day work week.

All these contenders—the unions, the run on the pound, and the British national character—vie for the title of chief villain in Britain's economic eclipse. But now a new contender has appeared: public spending. Put simply, the argument (synthesized and popularized by two Oxford economists, Robert Bacon and Walter Eltis) is this: during the last 15 years, British governments have progressively shifted more and more workers into public-sector jobs to the detriment of investment and exports. The figures are interesting. According to the Central Statistics Office, total employment in Britain remained roughly steady between 1965 and 1975 at about 25 million. Meanwhile, however, employment in the private sector dropped (from 19.2 million to 17.7 million) and public sector employment rose (from 6 million to 7.3 million). About half the new jobs were in education. Other public spending (on old-age pensions, for example) also increased.

According to Bacon and Eltis, the increasingly heavy burden of public spending has exacerbated most of Britain's problems. Financing this spending has required progressively higher taxes. If workers regarded additional government services as part of their real wages, then they might see higher taxes simply as the "price" of these services. But (not surprisingly) this hasn't happened. Workers believe that higher taxes reduce their real income; this fans union militancy and lifts wage demands. As a result, the burden of taxes and of "incomes" policies that limit price increases has fallen disporportionately on industry. Profits have been squeezed disastrously, slowing investment and crippling growth in the industrial base needed to support Britain's exports. Hence the chronic balance-of-payments problems. What is needed, then, is more capital investment in industry. A shift of this kind would require the government to channel resources away from public services, either by reducing the tax burden or devoting more public funds to industrial investment. In either case, the proportion of national output going towards traditional public services (education, health, defense, environment) would decline.

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What are Britain's prospects now? For the moment, not so good.

So far, the social contract has endured surprisingly well, and it must continue to do so if Britain is to wind down the wage-price spiral. Strikes have declined dramatically in 1976; through September, only 2.4 million working days had been lost against 6 million in 1975 and 14.8 million in 1974. According to some union officials, high joblessness has lowered militancy and created a willingness to accept declines in real wages that would have seemed preposterous only a few years ago. But the biggest strains on the social contract are yet to come. Through most of 1976, wage increases kept pace with inflation; over the next year they won't. Prices are now advancing more than twice as rapidly as likely wage increases.

Moreover, new tax and public spending policies—some already planned, and others resulting from negotiations with the international Monetary Fund for a $3.9-million loan—will cut living standards even more. Britain now is paying for some of the economic gimmicks adopted in the recent past. Despite the generally favorable impression abroad of the social contract, there is no magic to such incomes policies. They have been used for more than a decade in Britain and have probably done as much harm as good. Political comprises always must be made, and often the compromises simply make the long-run economic problems worse. To get union support, the Labour government heavily subsidized food and housing rents—subsidies that have contributed to the government deficit. The Conservatives did no better: they heavily subsidized energy prices and imposed tight price controls, which squeezed industry profits and accounted for some of the investment slump.

The social contract may work better than some of the previous experiment in "incomes policies" because of the very magnitude of Britain's economic problem. There is a recognition of economic realities that previously was missing. No incomes policy—indeed, no economic policy of any sort—can work without such a recognition, and the sad thing about Britain is that it has required so much time for the lesson to take hold.

Two things may give the Labour government's economic program a chance to succeed. The first is the world-wide recognition that Britain's problems are not Britain's alone. Despite everything, Britain still remains the fifth largest trading nation and a major force—both in symbol and reality. If Britain's economic miseries continue, the government may turn to complex and rigid controls on imports and foreign exchange, thus encouraging other countries to do likewise. Already in Britain, voices have been raised in support of a "seige economy." Recognizing the danger that this would set off a slow chain reaction of protectionist moves, other countries—principally the United States, Germany and Japan—may be willing to extend additional aid to Britain. These might be loans or guarantees intended to relieve Britain of the burden of the sterling balances. Amounting to about $10 billion last June, these balances represent funds held in pounds sterling, which could easily be converted into other currencies. Mass conversions would depress the price of the pound and increase Britain's immediate problems.

Britain's second bright spot is the North Sea. Oil production this year is estimated to reach 300,000 to 400,000 barrels daily, about 15 to 20 percent of Britain's internal requirements. By 1979 or 1980, production should cover all of Britain's needs and create increasing export opportunities in the '80s. Whether Britain will have oil to export will depend on its financial needs, its energy conservation policy and the extent of future discoveries. But the positive effects on the British balance of payments should be enormous—a plus of about 5.8 billion pounds by 1980, according to an estimate by the British Treasury. Against this, Britain has accumulated massive overseas debts: about $17 billion, including all its IMF loans, the prospective $3.9 billion new loan and private bank loans to government agencies. The North Sea oil income not only will provide much-needed breathing room for economic policy, but may also change international attitudes towards the strength of the British economy.

For an American, Britain still retains an irresistible charm; there is a temptation to see the country's current problems as an heroic struggle from which the Good Guys will emerge triumphant. Indeed, even the British indulge in this reverie. Early this fall, Harold Macmillan, the Conservative former prime minister, now 82, broke a self-imposed silence on contemporary politics to talk about the economic crisis. Macmillan urged a coalition government, and, evoking some of the great victories of World War II, talked about Britain's ability to pull herself together. There was a "chasm" to be crossed, but "it is shining on the other side, and I want our people to do it together."

It was stirring, but, one suspected, a bit misplaced. The story of Britain in the last three decades has not been an heroic epic, but a never-ending melodrama.

The real risk today is that the economic stresses will become so severe that they will lead to a political crisis. The Labour government clings tenuously to power, but it isn't clear that a Conservative government could cope much better. As a practical matter, its policies would probably not be very much different. And the Conservatives would face added uncertainties in keeping the unions in line. If the TUC has to submit to someone—and it has to—it prefers a Labour government. One only has to remember the disastrous miners' strike and the three-day work week of the Heath government to imagine the potential for turmoil. That is the basic problem posed by the strain of dropping real wages. The worst need not happen, but then again, Britain need never have gotten into this mess at all.

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Mikey and Nicky

(Paramount)

An odd, biting, grinning, sideways-scuttling rodent of a picture.

The story contains one surprise, but it's revealed early, and most of the film is built on that revelation. There's no way to discuss the picture without revealing it, and it's worth discussing. Besides, I've seen *Mikey and Nicky* twice, and its virtues and defects are not crucially affected by that revelation. So. . . .

Nicky (John Cassavetes) is a member of a Philadelphia numbers syndicate, on the lam because he and another man have stolen some of the boss' money. The other man has already been killed, and a contract is out on Nicky's life. Almost crazy with desperation he calls his old friend and boyhood pal, Mikey (Peter Falk), for help, even though Mikey works for the same boss. Mikey takes charge of the frenetic Nick and starts him toward the airport. En route they stop at a bar. We cut—to a hotel room, where a hit man (Ned Beatty) is given the name of the bar over the phone, by Mikey. The hit man gets there too late, so Mikey makes another report on their whereabouts. The film moves in a tension between what we see, the friendship of the two men, and what we know, that Mikey has fingered Nicky.

Now this sounds like the schema of a "character" crime picture, a so-called *film noir*, particularly since most of it is shadowy. (Virtually all of it takes place at night.) It is those things, but it is several things more. The first additional thing is, incredibly, that it's comic. Actual laughs are scattered, but the overall view of the two men is through a prism of comic detail. The script is by Elaine May, who also directed. Her previous scripts *A New Leaf* and *The Heartbreak Kid*, both adapted from other people's stories, were ungainly and ill-focused. *Mikey and Nicky* is her own work, and she sees its grimness through her well-known comic temperament. Nicky's neuroses, the squabbles, the horseplay that Mikey has to sustain in order to keep credible to Nicky, even the put-upon-drudge dialogue of the hit man, are seen by May as a kind of gallows-humor vaudeville. We get no sense that she thought up the plot and then decided to do it at a blackly comic angle: this is the way she saw the moral swamp from the start.

And the nature of the vaudeville, the fact that it's mostly a double act by two men, is also part of the film's difference. Among the most deeply ingrained American myths is the one of the two male friends. Huck and Tom crystallized it in the 19th century; *Midnight Cowboy* and *The Hired Hand* are only two of its latter-day film uses. May, possibly with bitter amusement at all those decades of male glorification of male bonding, may have wanted to treat this now-classic pair as latently homoerotic (one screws a woman while the other waits—just barely vicarious homosexuality); she may have wanted to show the hatred and envy she sees under this noble concept. (Envy and rejection are what motivate Mikey's betrayal.) At the end Mikey sacrifices Nicky to protect his home, his very heterosexuality. Mikey and his wife, in their suburban house, pile furniture against the front door to keep Nicky from breaking in, to hold him outside as a target for the approaching gunman.

Further to this theme, few will miss the point that the very title *Mikey and Nicky* echoes the name Mike Nichols, who was May's partner for years in a celebrated "mixed" double act. The play on Nichols' name may have no more significance than Orson Welles' private joke on the last name of that dear old Irish actor Whitford Kane. On the other hand May did choose this particular joke. Under this film's title the double act of male duplicities takes on some additional wicked gleam.

The overall shape of the story, a life in a night with the picture ending at dawn, is not new, which of course May knows. Surely she knows the peak antecedent *La Notte*. Whether or not she was consciously using Antonioni as a general model, she too has her "couple" recapitulate their lives together and, more important, delineate the society around them, to which they have succumbed. The two men move through as wide a range of memory and experience as could be credible in one night. They embrace; they quarrel; they fool around; they wrestle in a rainy street; they visit a woman with whom Nick embarrasses Mikey; they visit a black bar; their wives and their children come into it; there's a baby, there's death; they visit Nick's mother's grave where the past lives of the two men open up behind them like a classical perspective behind the spot where they are standing. And underneath it all is the betrayal, mocking the bath in nostalgia, as we feel Mikey tacitly justifying it to himself out of Nicky's supposed rejection of his love.

The film moves from station to station like a medieval morality play except that there is absolutely no morality. Every person in the picture, from the racket boss, who is apparently a lawyer, to the hit man, who complains about the money he's losing on this job, accepts the immoral landscape of his life as the norm. The wives of the two principals accept it. Fully aware of what their husbands do for a living, they are like canted versions of soap-opera wives. One of them worries only about her home and the comfort of her husband. The other has left her husband but only because he plays around with other women and doesn't pay her enough attention. It's almost as if May were balancing her surgery on male-bonding with some slashing of bovine female acceptance of hubby-as-god. (Not so incidentally, the cast of characters is fairly evenly balanced between Jews and gentiles.)

But *Mikey and Nicky* is not a satire, nothing so fundamentally benevolent. It's not even ironic to the extent that *The Godfather* was, with the Diane Keaton

Films Worth Seeing

The Last Tycoon. Robert De Niro's romantic-ruthless performance is the chief reason to see this fuddling of Fitzgerald.

The Marquise of O. . . A quiet esthetic triumph: great literature (Kleist's novella) transformed into beautiful film. By Eric Rohmer.

Network. Everything you've always known about TV, hyped up amusingly. All the sparkle and value of a zircon.

The Seven-per-cent Solution. Fine fun. Sherlock Holmes meets Sigmund Freud, and why ever not? Excellent cast.

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character as a reference point. May has plunged her camera right into the sewer and closed the cover. The sewer creatures, harsh or less harsh, loyal by sewer standards or not, are seen as merely topographical gradations within the pit. The only hint of irony—there is no compassion—is between the author outside the work and the work itself.

May overstates the case, probably consciously, by telling us that these people "are" the world, but she must feel that, actually or symbolically, they represent a good deal of it; and this picture states her loathing. That loathing, somewhat sophomorically simple though it is, gives the picture its integrity. It is utter: nastiness fills the screen from edge to edge.

May has directed as intimately as possible. All through it I felt that she was trying to press me up against the two men in mimesis of the feeling between them (and thus with an implicit comment on what mere closeness is worth). Her editing, about the duration of which there has been much talk, is sometimes ragged. Whiskers disappear, reappear, and disappear again during the same sequence; likewise cigarettes. The picture could have been shorter: the second visit to the "easy" woman serves a merely formal purpose, it doesn't really hold us.

The two leading actors make the most, which is considerable, of their usual naturalism. Cassavetes plays like a hysterical animal, laughing a lot in pure fright, scenting dangers, still supermale enough to be dangerously silly around women. Falk plays his honest straightforward Good Guy, only this Good Guy is at his best a criminal, and he's not even loyal in crime. He's a warped Willy Loman, not well liked, who will still be doomed to mediocrity even after he has pleased his boss with this betrayal.

I've been less than ecstatic about these two men in the past, particularly in Cassavetes' own film, the improvisational *Husbands*. I'm sure there was some improvisation here, some flexed interplay, but there was a design under it and a director who was the right antagonist to the whole enterprise. And out scurries a little furry film that first interests, then amuses, then bites you, then scurries away again, leaving you a bit sickened. But authentically sickened.

The Cycles and Gyres of Hollywood History

Arnold Toynbee saw the rise and fall of civilizations in recurrent cyclical patterns while William Butler Yeats saw the history of civilization itself as a circularly spinning gyre that revolved between the antipodes of order and chaos. In its own modest way, the history of the American movie reveals a parallel cyclical pattern: periods of adventurous imagination and innovation have been succeeded by periods of stabilization and formula which have then been succeeded by periods of innovation, and so forth.

Not that the adventurous cinema eras necessarily produced the best movies—for adventurousness in art is not synonymous with either beauty or success. But there is a spiritual quality in the best movies of those adventurous eras—a conscious delight in the surprising, the unexpected, the spontaneous, the unfamiliar—that differs from the spiritual quality of the classic, controlled movies from more stable cinema eras.

The most obviously adventurous American movie era was the teens, a decade which began with uncharted artistic and commerical seas but ended with a clearly drawn map of movie art and commerce that has survived to the present day. In 1910 movies were one reelers lasting 10 to 15 minutes; there were no familiar movie stars; the production center was in and around New York; and the films were deplorably sloppy in their acting (excessive), sets (painted flats), camera work (functional, at best), lighting (if any), editing (virtually none), and plot construction (incoherent). But by 1920

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movies were feature films lasting over an hour, Hollywood was their production center, and they had discovered every visual and dramatic value of black-and-white moving imagery. The pioneers had discovered movie comedy (Sennett, Chaplin, Fairbanks, Arbuckle) and movie drama (Griffith, Ince, DeMille, von Stroheim), movie cutting and movie composing, movie sets and movie lighting and movie stars (Mary Pickford, Lillian Gish, Gloria Swanson, Thomas Meighan, Geraldine Farrar, William S. Hart and Tom Mix).

For excitement, energy, freedom and experimentation no movie decade can touch the teens. Those who made movies also made up their own artistic rules because none existed that made any artistic sense. You would make a film with a camera, some people, and a few ideas in your head. Lighting effects (that, it was claimed, film could not record and audiences not perceive) were improvised on the spot and were recorded and were perceived and were lovely. Editing effects (that, it was claimed, audiences could not understand) were conceived and improvised and understood. It was an era of inspiration, of trying things that had never been tried, of the courage to sacrifice general smoothness for the flash of brilliance or to fail altogether. It was a period when a man could (and did) make up three-hour spectacle films out of his own head as he went along.

Although the '20s have been called the Era of Wonderful Nonsense, for the movies it was a very carefully controlled and contrived nonsense. The '20s brought order to the movies and brought the movies to order. Indeed, more and more of the movies seemed made to order. The '20s was the first decade of the big studios—MGM, Paramount, Universal and Fox. And with the studios came production schedules and budgets, detailed shooting scripts, formula plots and formula stars, and specialized departments of craftsmanship, all of which were intended to make the shooting of a movie in Hollywood as efficient and predictable as turning out a Model T in Detroit. Erich von Stroheim, a surviving pioneer from the previous decade who liked to take his camera into the world and make films out of his head, did not survive long in the studio atmosphere of the '20s. Irving Thalberg, the Henry Ford of Hollywood, fired him twice—once from Universal and once from MGM.

The studios did not kill the movies, and even many of those (like Chaplin, Fairbanks, Lloyd and Sennett) who had made spirited movies in that earlier, breezier decade made even better (if more controlled and crafted) ones in this one. But the spirit of the movies had been tamed, and much of the exploratory excitement of America's previous decade now blew over from across the Atlantic—from the surrealists in France, the expressionists in Germany, and the montagists in the Soviet Union.

Although the introduction of synchronized sound threatened to destroy the art of cinema altogether with many terrible and terribly clumsy talkies, the new technological discovery reintroduced the spirit of experimentation and exploration that had gone with the studios. The first five years of the 1930s (at the Paramount studio in particular) produced both daring and dazzling explorations of a new territory—the ways of integrating visual imagery in motion with musical, verbal, vocal and evocative sound. No one else's sound films have ever been more extravagant syntheses of sight-sound than the imaginative excesses of Ernst Lubitsch, Josef von Sternberg and Busby Berkeley in this period, and what other era could (or did) produce such carefree and careless lunacy as the Herman Mankiewicz production unit (whose paramount efforts were *Million Dollar Legs* and *Duck Soup*)?

But just as the craft of the '20s followed the discoveries of the teens, the craft of the late '30s and '40s followed the explorations of the early '30s. The evolution was signaled by the bankruptcy of Paramount in 1935, while MGM, which had never surrendered its tested methods and models to the pioneers, remained the most solid film factory in Hollywood. The reassertion of the studios' producing power was accompanied by a retreat inside the studios' buildings, for sound recording made outdoor shooting increasingly difficult. At least a silent film could frequently and easily escape the studio to use nature itself as its setting—one of the chief delights of movies in their earliest era. But the imagery of sound films was increasingly wall- and room-bound, environments where both visual and vocal tones could be perfectly and precisely controlled.

The final and most recent era of innovation violated this comfortable and careful indoor formula. Once again a technological invention created the possibility for artistic innovation. But the technology that triumphed in the mid-1950s was the less heralded and noted in its day—not the gimmickry of 3-D, CinemaScope and Cinerama, but the increasing portability of ordinary motion picture equipment. The new high-speed film stocks (both monochrome and color) eliminated the need for the bulkiest and heaviest lighting equipment; the new, lightweight tape-recording machines could capture synchronized dialogue and sounds with a minimum of technicians and difficulty. Once again a movie could be made easily and inexpensively by taking a cast and equipment into the world and using the world as its background (indeed it could be made less expensively than in the studio where the craft unions had driven production costs out of Hollywood).

The inspiration for this era of adventure came not from the machines but from the new filmakers of Europe, who showed how the machines could create a spiritually different kind of movie. The Italian neo-realists, the French New Waveists, and, in the mid-1960s, the Czech realists were all willing to sacrifice the polished perfection of studio filming for the rougher yet more spontaneous feeling of accident, imperfection and unretouched reality. They were willing to tolerate imperfect shadows, jiggling and bouncing cameras, gusts of wind, grainier film, less balanced exposures for the authenticity and casual informality of shooting life on the spot and on the run. To some extent these films had returned to the exploratory assumptions of the teens when film effects were conceived and improvised in the course of shooting.

Looking back on that controversy of the mid-1950s and early 1960s about the relative value of American movies as opposed to European "art films," I think the real issue was not which produced better films but which represented a more valid spiritual approach to the art of moviemaking. The best formula movies of this period (most of them in some Scope or other and directed by

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Billy Wilder, George Stevens, Alfred Hitchcock, John Ford, Douglas Sirk, Nicholas Ray, Otto Preminger and the like) perpetuated the assumptions of the previous studio eras—a maximum of subtlety, grace and insight within a highly polished technique and a clearly structured narrative pattern. But the foreign films glowed with the fire of discovery and the flush of experiment—the willingness to be elliptical or irrational, uneven or inconsistent. Like the pioneers they were willing to sacrifice the smoothness of perfection for the flash of brilliance.

In the 1960s these adventurous expectations affected American movies as well, resulting in the most consciously experimental movie decade since the teens. This new attitude produced *Paths of Glory, The Hustler, Shadows, Experiment in Terror, Ride the High Country, Lonely Are the Brave, David and Lisa, Dr. Strangelove, The Pawnbroker, Mickey One, A Fine Madness, You're a Big Boy Now, The Graduate, Bonnie and Clyde, Easy Rider, The Wild Bunch, M*A*S*H*, Midnight Cowboy, Five Easy Pieces, Joe, Medium Cool* and many others of similar style and spirit. Although these might not be the best and most valuable films of the decade, they certainly seem among the most interesting in their psychological probing and social rebelliousness, in their willingness to try new principles of scripting, shooting and cutting, in their informality and casual spontaneity, in their deliberate attempts to be "little," "off-beat," intimate experiences rather than immense, impressively grand and polished entertainments.

That innovative spirit seems once more to have been locked into the past and to have been succeeded by a later era of formula. There now seem two inevitable and firmly established genres, to which almost every American movie today (interesting or not) seems to conform. First, there is the terrifying thriller or thrillifying terror genre, which even has its clearly demarcated sub-genres: transportational terror (*The Poseidon Adventure, Airport, Airport 1975, Juggernaut, The Hindenburg*), animalicious terror (*Ben, Willard, Jaws, Sssssssst, The Killer Bees, King Kong*), demonic terror (*The Exorcist, The Omen, Obsession*), architectural and environmental terror (*Earthquake, The Towering Inferno*), and humaniacal terror (*The Tenant, Marathon Man, Two-Minute Warning, Black Sunday*). The frozen fixity of these genres is emphasized by television's slavishly copying the identical formulas for its cut-rate, made-for-TV versions of them. The only other contemporary American formula, more common for comedy, is the movies-about-movies genre (*Hearts of the West, The Last Tycoon*, and virtually all of Peter Bogdanovich, Mel Brooks and Woody Allen)

Just as in its studio-era days, the styles of today's movies have become as codified and conventionalized as they ever were. Ironically, the very stylistic devices that seemed freshly innovative and insightful 10 years ago have been frozen into today's obligatory clichés. The slow and accelerated motion, the freeze frames, the shock cutting, the jiggling hand-held camera, the streaks and flashes of lens flare, the pronounced use of rack focus (changing focus within the shot)—all the bizarrely expressive cinematic tricks that startled the trade a decade ago have now become mere tricks of the trade today. Perhaps I am feeling a nostalgia for the turbulent '60s, but today's movies no longer feel as exciting, as challenging, as important as they did five years ago.

What brings these changes of the movie season and cycles? Technology obviously has something to do with them. The creation of a machine that allows the cinema to reveal something new will tempt the cinema artist to reveal it. But audience attendance patterns have as much to do with the cycles as anything. The periods of stable, more conventional cinema styles and statements have also tended to be periods of audience stability—of a uniform, predictable audience in both quantity and quality. The two decades of greatest artistic adventurousness have been the two decades of greatest audience volatility.

In the teens, the movie audience perhaps doubled, and its character changed with its size. The plush and comfortable movie palaces replaced the tiny, storefront nickelodeons, that crammed 200 patrons into uncomfortable chairs, admission prices jumped from a nickel or dime to a quarter or more, and the theaters moved into the central business and shopping areas of the cities. Movies in the teens evolved from a working-class pleasure into a middle-class one, even as the working classes themselves were evolving in the same direction.

Conversely, the movie audience fell to less than half its former size in the '50s and '60s. Competing recreational activities seduced significant numbers of Americans away from the movies—spectator sports (the period revealed an immense increase in audiences for football, baseball, basketball and hockey games, tennis matches and the like), individual sports (also an immense increase in Americans who skied, golfed, camped, played tennis and so forth), and, of course, television. Those who continued to go to movies were afficionados—people who especially enjoyed leaving the house to watch moving images on a screen. They were, in general, the young, the educated, the hip and the stoned ("the generation of the Bomb and Pepsi Cola," as Godard called them in *Masculine/Feminine*). The movies (both old and new) were, like their rock music, an intrinsic part of their social, intellectual, spiritual and sexual lives. The barons of Hollywood commerce, always seeking to give the public what it wanted, gave this new public the adventurous, experiential movies it wanted—once they had discovered who that public was. Perhaps today's return to stable movie formulas reveals that this public has once again become more predictable—both in its size and its values.

Gerald Mast

Gerald Mast is the author of *The Comic Mind: Comedy and the Movies* (Bobbs-Merrill).

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Books Considered

Norman Thomas: The Last Idealist by W. A. Swanberg

(Scribner's; $15)

Norman Thomas was one of nature's noble men. A tall, commanding, Lincolnesque figure of a man, he had a powerful and vibrant voice and communicated a presence which is hard to describe. When he entered a room, even if people did not know who he was, they were aware that someone important had walked in. Even at the end of his life, when he was blind and incapacitated in a nursing home, he was a powerful force, a man with dignity and intelligence even on his death bed. There was something quite stoic about him in those last days, a quality at variance with the image which many have of him as a good but sentimental preacher.

W. A. Swanberg's new biography of Thomas is a solid, useful volume which assembles in clear, sympathetic and readable prose the basic facts of the American Socialist's life. Taken together with Harry Fleischman's affectionate and very insightful memoir of Thomas, it provides us with a sound basis for the political analysis of one of the most fascinating figures of the century. Swanberg's book, however, is not itself a political biography. The facts are there but, except for one or two exceptional occasions, Swanberg does not attempt to deal with the critical political problem posed by Norman Thomas' lifetime: why was this gifted, charismatic leader a political failure?

Thomas was an exceedingly thoughtful man all of his life. Indeed, Swanberg reminds us that when he joined the Socialist party in 1918, his application stated, "Perhaps to certain members of the party, my socialism would not be of the most orthodox variety. As you know, I have a profound fear of the undue exaltation of the state and a profound faith that the new world we desire must depend upon freedom and fellowship rather than upon any sort of coercion whatsoever." That was written long before the totalitarian nightmare which justified itself in the name of socialism came into being. Yet it anticipated that possibility. Moreover, it was typical of Thomas that from the very beginning of his commitment to American socialism, he was undogmatic, irreverent, self-critical, and at the end of his life, when his great overriding concern was peace—the struggle against nuclear armament as well as the fight to end the unconscionable war in Vietnam—he remained exceedingly careful about his opinions. He was well read in the literature of disarmament, familiar with the work of the crisis managers whom he opposed and, as Swanberg notes, debated both Henry Kissinger, then a Harvard professor, and Herman Kahn.

But if Thomas then clearly did not suffer in the dogmatism and sectarianism that seems to have afflicted American Socialists as a disease, why did the movement which he led fail? He was a man deeply concerned with political power. He did not simply want moral victories or to score debater's points. He wanted very desperately to change the way the society was organized. Moreover, he rejected the easy out which said that socialism had triumphed in the form of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. When people would say to him that Roosevelt had carried out the Socialist platform, Thomas used to reply, "Yes, he carried it out on a stretcher," and of course Thomas was right. The New Deal, which seemed so radical at the time and which was indeed a progressive development in American life, now turns out to be a salvation of the status quo which allowed the powers that be to stay in charge at the price of some significant ameliorations of the more outrageous injustices of the system. So Thomas did not triumph vicariously in the New Deal and he knew it.

Swanberg considers one theory of his failure: that Thomas was too softhearted and indecisive as a political leader. It is true, as Swanberg remarks, that "the art of ruthless political management, of deals and horse trades, eluded Thomas. He was the inspirer, the agitator, the idea man, the reformer—not the man at a desk in a smoke-filled room giving orders. He was a moralist seeking to uphold morality in a profession dominated by the wily." Granting that, are we to explain the decline of American socialism on the basis of these admirable personal qualities of Norman Thomas? I think not.

Swanberg points out, for example, that Thomas' failures as a political leader in the 1930s mainly involved his inability to hold together the Socialist old guard, the militants, the Trotskyists who raided the party, and various and other factions and groups. But my own instinct is that once the factional wars had elevated such disputes to central importance, the basic failure had already occured.

I see the more fundamental cause in a problem which Swanberg passes over much too quickly. The Debsian Socialist party which Thomas had joined could find a considerable role for itself in American life between 1901 and 1920, when Debs ran for President of the United States while a prisoner in Atlanta Penitentiary, because the American labor movement only reached a small and relatively well-off portion of the working class and because that labor movement itself had no fundamental political commitment. However, by the 1930s, when Thomas had become the outstanding leader of the Socialist party, the situation had changed radically. In 1932, of course, Roosevelt had run as a fiscally orthodox conservative, attacking Herbert Hoover for not being prudent enough. But by 1934, the President had begun to move and by the campaign of 1936, significant Socialist elements from the needle trades which had long been a major working class source of Socialist strength, were committed to FDR.

What was happening—and I do not think Thomas realized it at the time which was an understandable error—was that American workers were entering politics on a class basis and making what was in effect a formal commitment to the liberal wing of the Democratic party. It became impossible for socialism to present itself as the political tribune of the workers when the workers' organizations, now much more numerous than in Gompers' days, had democratically chosen to support Roosevelt.

Thus, as Swanberg reports, various members of the Socialist party, like Powers Hapgood and Franz Daniel, who were active in the CIO, were confronted with a conflict of loyalties. Could they remain true to their Socialist political convictions while acting as functionaries for unions which were giving support to Roosevelt? This was the period in which a young, auto union leader by the name of Walter Reuther resolved that contradiction by choosing to work with his very effective union as against remaining in a Socialist party which was already wracked with factional squabbling. The tragedy, from my point of view, is that such a choice had to be made.

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In any case, I feel that the fundamental failure of American socialism centers here in its relationship with the New Deal and the emergent industrial union movement of that period. Thomas was unprepared for that development. There is some evidence that after the catastrophic drop in his vote in the 1936 presidential election, he was rethinking his options. However, before Thomas had a chance to seriously consider the possibility of making some kind of accommodation with the left wing of the New Deal, the issue of World War II took center stage. Roosevelt was a disguised and wily interventionist; Thomas, though no longer a pacifist, was an opponent of American involvement in the war. Given that conflict between Thomas and Roosevelt, it was impossible for him to consider a policy of critical support to the President.

Looking back, it seems to me that Roosevelt was right and Thomas wrong on the principled issue of intervention. But I don't want to suggest that Thomas should be burdened with my hindsight. He was being loyal to his deepest convictions which, from the beginning of his life to the very end, were anti-war, and if I think him wrong in his attitude toward American involvement in World War II, I was obviously in profound agreement with the magnificent work he did in helping to create the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, and arguing tirelessly on behalf of nuclear disarmament and, in the very end of his life, in resisting to the utmost limits of his physical capacity, the American intervention in Vietnam.

Moreover, in that anti-war struggle at the end of his life, I think Thomas proved himself to be, not simply a man of ideals and decency, but one who understood the American people much better than some of the young militants of that time. I remember watching Thomas at a SANE rally against the war in the fall of 1965. Burdens of age weighed heavily upon him that day. He sat on the platform near the Washington Monument, leaning back, sagging heavily, his eyes closed and one wondered if he could even make it to the podium, but when he reached the microphone, his vibrant spirit came alive again and he gave the most youthful, forceful speech of the day. He said on that occasion that he did not want to burn the American flag, but to clean it. That, I think, was exactly right, and would that the anti-war movement had engaged in less counter-cultural theater, and had followed Thomas' brilliant advice.

Thomas was a failure in what he defined as the central task of his lifetime, for reasons that have less to do with his personality and more to do with unpredictable changes in American history. He was an enormous success in almost everything else: in his defense of the rights of Japanese-Americans during World War II, in his commitment to civil liberties, in his struggle against the war in Vietnam. Swanberg has given us a revealing portrait of this extraordinary human being. The definitive political biography still needs to be written, but it is good to have this book.

Michael Harrington

Michael Harrington is chairman of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee.

Youthful Writing by Albert Camus

(Knopf; $8.95)

In *The Words*, Sartre pokes fun at our mania for reconstructing the past of our "great men" backwards, as if no irrevelancies or distractions had ever crept into their slightest word or actions. He singles out as example an old-fashioned book he read as a child entitled *The Childhood of Famous Men*. There the retrospective illusion reigned: "Without ever mentioning the name of Bach, Rousseau or Molière," he notes, "the author made a point of constantly inserting allusions to their future greatness, of recalling, casually, by means of a detail, their most famous works or deeds, of contriving his accounts so artfully that it was impossible to understand the most trivial incident without relating it to subsequent events."

The name of Camus, of course, does appear on the cover of this handsome and carefully edited volume. But when one opens the book one is left, nonetheless, with an uneasy feeling that just such an operation has been perpetrated upon that "early writing." Not until page 111 do we encounter the first of the juvenilia announced, a piece on Verlaine written by the 19-year-old student. The first hundred odd pages of the book are pre-empted by an essay written by the editor, Paul Viallaneix. If we choose to read, submissively, from "cover to cover," we may have lost interest in the rather frail collection of texts that follow the essay. Working in traditional manner from within an overview of Camus' work, Viallaneix provides a kind of running commentary on the texts themselves. Along the way he furnishes a few quite interesting insights into the situation of the young Camus still surprisingly unknown to us. (This reminds us that a well-documented biography of Camus is overdue.) But he is so anxious to merge those early writings into the corpus of Camus' later works that he well-nigh destroys them in the process. The essay acts as a solvent rather than as a frame for what follows. After the seven chapters of the essay, one reads on with a sense of "déjà vu": nothing has been left to the initiative of the text or reader.

Viallaneix is quite ingenuous about it all. "It seemed appropriate," he writes, "to have a selection of Albert Camus' youthful writings *follow* an essay attempting to relate these writings to the readings that nourished them, and to the *future works* for which they served as model." (p. 105) The italics are mine. The texts then are adjuncts, extended footnotes to the essay, a selection "deliberately incomplete" illustrating the critic's thesis. That thesis, I can only in all conscience, discard: "Models"? Hardly; the retrospective illusion has, I fear, begotten a mirage. At best some of these pages are early fragmentary drafts of well-known later texts, most of them sketches for the first literary essay Camus published: *The right side and the wrong side*. One may even hesitate to see in them harbingers of great things, so low-toned and at times painstaking do they seem.

There is an initial stumbling-block for the American reader, eager to extend his reading of Camus, and who may be exasperated to encounter essentially yet another critic. What Gallimard published, what the French reader buys is not quite the same book. Not that the contents are different. I may sound rather like a character out of a Borges short story, but nonetheless I feel I must make my point. The French reader bought a book by Paul Viallaneix, followed by a few early pieces by Camus so announced on the title page. The American reader, relying on the dust jacket, bought a book by Camus introduced by Viallaneix. The change of emphasis is not inconsequential. The readers' expectations are not the same in

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Albert Camus by David Schorr

the two instances.

Further, the French publication is, in my case, self-defined. It is a "cahier," a particular type of publication, with a specific function. Although a cahier can be a one-shot affair, it usually belongs to an open-ended series. The series is a medium for ongoing work centering on a specific writer and is addressed to the select group of that writer's "aficionados," scholars and devoted amateurs. "Cahiers" within a series presumably will continue to come out perpetuating a writer's reputation, publishing whatever unpublished materials of his are available—letters, notes, etc., but also critical articles and pertinent information until something gives way—money, interest or materials. The Gallimard "cahiers" are a lavish and impressive lot, clearly distinguished from other Gallimard books by their special format and presentation. They have proliferated of late—Bernanos, Claudel, Gide, Proust, Valéry have theirs—an august company of canonized "classics," whom since 1971 Camus has joined. The French reader who acquires a "cahier" does not expect that it will necessarily contain significant writing by the author to whose illustration it is dedicated. It may of course, as was the case with *A Happy Death*, which was the first of the Camus cahiers. Publication in a cahier indicates that the status of the text is of interest to be sure and not to be overlooked, but that it is not a work that stands on its own. Even though the jacket of the Knopf volume carries the subtitle "Cahiers II," the indication carries no message to the uninitiated reader, who may then carp at the content. But, in any case, since it is Camus that the American reader will expect to be reading rather than Viallaneix, I shall forthwith turn to the 147 pages of the Camus text, wishing, quite frankly, that the relation between text and essay had been reversed and a less extensive, more pertinent and factual preface provided.

The 18 pieces chosen, all written in the three years between 1932 and 1934 by a young Algerian just moving out of his teens, are given in three sections, year by year. They are quite varied, running from formal short critical articles or reviews published in the local "little magazine" *Sud*, to rather elegiac reveries one might classify as prose-poems, and short meditations; there are three short fairy tales, reading notes, even a somewhat rhapsodic poem on the Mediterranean that Caligula might have appreciated. This is the Camus of the *Notebooks*, a rather diffident, generally solemn, sometimes plaintive Camus, who has a voice but no style yet of his own. One catches, for instance, the weary intonations of the very young Gide in a quasi symbolic prose-poem on the "Moorish House," mingling with Nietzschean overtones in a series entitled *Intuitions*.

Perhaps the most endearing feature of these pieces is their youthful earnestness. Who, if not an adolescent, would write an essay on music, to prove the thesis, rigorously deduced from the theories of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche "that music, because it is the most complete of the arts must be felt rather than understood"? or another to show "that Art lies in a Communion that ignores life"? or would make a bored God dialogue with his soul? Direct, simple, sometimes simplistic, the writing is not trivial though the writer is haunted by the adolescent fear of cliches. "Have reread my notes on Gide. Frightfully trite. Childish commonplaces. I became enraged at the mediocrity of my thinking in view of the depth of feeling that I have for Gide." And cliches do put in an appearance along with such words as "heart" and "soul" rather prompt to come under the young man's pen. Yet I think one can see that Camus at that time approached writing as a "cool" medium in the McLuhan sense. That is perhaps what, beyond a few thematic recurrences of which too much could be made, gives the writing a firm and distinctive texture in spite of the young author's diffidence, announcing the future writer. There is as yet little sign in that writing of the tensions and violence that erupt with *Caligula* and *The Stranger*. Camus is clearly in search of form and technique.

It is rather curious, perhaps a bit dangerous though not unusual, for a writer's works to reach his public in reverse. Between the years 1963 and 1975 five Camus volumes have come out here going backwards in time toward those beginnings in the early '30s. A new Camus is in the making, no longer the guru of an age, a writer whose craft rather than metaphysics draws the critic to scrutinize his work. He is now taking his place in that mid-century generation, as a "western," perhaps even to a certain extent a "world" figure who deeply influenced the art of narrative fiction. One is grateful to Knopf for making available these early writings in Ellen Kennedy's unusually smooth and competent English translation. One would

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venture to hope, however, that if further "Camus Cahiers" appear, as they surely will, any confusion as to their actual context be firmly dissipated.

Germaine Brée

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On Human Finery by Quentin Bell

(Schocken Books; $14.95)

Looking Good by Clara Pierre

(Reader's Digest Press; $8.95)

Journal of the Century by Bryan Holme, et. al.

(Viking Press; $16.95)

Books on clothes are getting more serious. That is to say, they are getting simultaneously less solemn and less frivolous. They are striking a new note more consonant with the actual importance of clothing in people's minds. And what this means is that the national consciousness of dress seems to have passed the stage of painful awareness and become comfortably internalized, a little bit the way the consciousness of sex did, a few generations back. It was not so very long ago that outside of fiction the importance of sex was mentioned in print either in terms proper to a heavy medical matter or with that overwrought and sometimes jocular defiance which is a sure sign of mental discomfort. The same has more recently been true of clothes. Just as with sex, novelists had showed that they understood the private importance of clothing long before it was admissible as a public subject. The importance of *fashion* is not quite the same thing, but apparently even harder for serious folk to acknowledge. Fashion has certainly been given its due, not only in novels but in specialized journalism for two centuries. But fashion-journalism itself has never had any status. On the other hand, essays in English on fashion and dress by respectable literary men, like Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, have tended to come down heavily on the ridiculousness of the whole business, and so to set the tone for generations to come. Oscar Wilde defined fashion as "a form of ugliness so intolerable we have to change it every six months," and he suggested, doubtless with intent to shock, some quite unrealistic esthetic standards for dress, to be followed instead of the mode. Actual fashion,as it really works, was agreed to be the reprehensible concern of idle ladies and silly gentlemen. Honest men and women (decently dressed, naturally) had their minds on higher things, and so, of course, did writers, really. Close attention to clothes, in print or in private, was usually something to be apologized for obliquely, by being over-serious or over-flippant.

All this has canged, but slowly. Shame still clings to preoccupation with dress, but we are feeling better about it. Signs of possibilities for new sartorial mental health showed clearly when the '60s put all in doubt. As with sex and politics, options in clothing proliferated. It became obvious that a great number of restrictive and uncomfortable laws people used to associate with clothes did not really matter at all, but that clothes themselves really mattered quite a lot. After all, it became inescapable that clothes can be used as deadly serious dramatic costumes, right here in real life, with stunning effect. They can produce intense feelings of hostility and of solidarity, between whole sections of society no less than between family members. At any rate, after *Hair*, blue jeans, toplessness, radical chic, Eastern religions, etc., etc., etc., it may be true that anybody can dress as he likes: but it is just as true that nobody can ignore clothes. Freedom brings responsibilities. There is always some group you are being seen to join or to shun, whatever you wear. And so because clothes must now be admitted to have so much public clout, so much associative power, thinking a lot about how to dress is no longer a shameful thing for any honest man.

The tone of the literature on the subject has begun to reflect this. Not only can we now admit that self-presentation is important to us, and that clothes are worn for identification, we can also see that clothes are everyone's handy kit for self-expression, a kind of personal art-form. So books now appear not on the history of dress, not on the mysterious madness of fashion, but on the cultural expressiveness of clothes. One of the best of these currently appearing is Quentin Bell's *On Human Finery*. This book is a rewritten version of one which originally appeared in 1947; and the difference between the two demonstrates the change in the general viewpoint. Much of the earlier essay is arch in tone, still conventionally apologetic for taking clothes seriously. Although there is some overlap, the new one is completely straightforward about its message.

Bell is trying to account sensibly, not scientifically, for variety in the look of clothes through time, to find a rationale for change in fashion and for the extremity in its expression. To do this he uses Veblen's categories—his "pecuniary canons of taste"—to describe what makes certain clothes desirable to certain people at certain moments. Veblen's observation that esthetic desirability attaches to anything with high economic status is obviously useful, and his categories are still apt—"Conspicuous consumption," "conspicuous waste," "conspicuous leisure" apply naturally to dress. But Bell needs to add "conspicuous outrage." This is not exactly pecuniary, and it brings into sudden focus the raw emotional power of clothing, its link with sex and death. This connection is deeper than any affinities with status, power and money, and it brings dress inevitably into the realm of art, where Bell himself is at home. Veblen himself wrote about fashion with the ponderous, lefthanded humor the subject then seemed to require. In the present climate, Bell clearly feels more free to take seriously the psychological and esthetic dimensions of clothes. But his final proposition is that fashion is at an end. From Veblen's point of view, considering fashion as the simple expression of the class struggle, he is probably right. But psychologically and esthetically he is obviously wrong. The undying creative dissatisfaction which is the spur of any art will continue to nourish and govern the temporal flow of style in dress.

Another straightforward attempt to analyze the importance of clothes is made by Clara Pierre in *Looking Good*. This is an unfortunate title for a brisk, acutely contemporary run-down on what dress is now doing for us, and how it is being marketed to do it best, as against the background of what used to be the case. Pierre looks closely at the multiplicity of visual effects sought and achieved only in the last 10 years, and then makes the same generalization as

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Bell: fashion as we used to know it is over. She is, however, discussing specifically the recent successful resistance to the century-old domination of fashion by *haute couture*. She is engaged in documenting the exact shift, especially in the American mind, from the sense of the French designer as the ultimate dictator of taste in dress to the sense of personal choice as its perpetually rebellious arbiter. Such a shift was based essentially on economic pressure inside the clothing business which caused the further flowering of the ready-to-wear-industry, but it has apparently brought about a revolution in the whole mechanism of fashion change. Beautiful and desirable ways of looking now come from sources quite other than the minds of designers. They come directly from the look of work-clothes and sportsgear, from the folk-dress of rich and poor all over the world, and from the junk of the past. Moreover, smart people are marketing these looks as fashion as quickly as public caprice can seize on them. "Keeping up" no longer means decreasing one's distance from Balenciaga; it means keeping pace with innumerable possibilities. And consequently, designers now have to design for consumers who are exposed to all this, and who also wish to exercise independence of choice. Designers now must compete with and encompass the whole world of sartorial possibility.

Pierre is thoroughly familiar with the current state of French fashion and so she has a better perspective than most on how the *couture* altered its status and thus altered international fashion-consciousness. She has also acquired a European standard to which to compare American attitudes toward self-expression and American consumer habits. Her chapters on bodily beauty in particular are most apposite in surveying the persistent American passion for being thin and being young. Because it is corollary to new habits of dress, Pierre has examined with some care the present state of American beauty culture and commerce. She describes in excruciating detail the mysteries of cosmetic surgery and dermatology, and the exact kind of services purveyed both at beauty farms and at the vast range of establishments devoted to body-control. She also gives a quick analysis of fashions in cosmetics consumption, from Charles of the Ritz to the corner drugstore.

The virtue of this book lies in its volume and density of first-class information. Its weakness is in its historical and esthetic generalizations. Because of its good sense, close observation and economy of language, this book has power and speed; but it occasionally displays excessive haste. Pierre makes a few mistakes of historical fact, and she seems too eager to formulate easy solutions and jump to unsteady conclusions, especially about the past and future. But she has a very firm grip on the present.

Journal of the Century basically documents changing fashion in sexual attitudes. This big volume celebrates not quite a century of *The Ladies' Home Journal* ("The Magazine Women Believe In") by offering an anthology of chronological samples. The editors and compilers want us to believe in the seriousness both of their endeavors and of the original magazine's aims, but despite the impressive roster of contributors, they protest too much. The *Journal* was incredibly successful. But it was really always a women's magazine, just like *Godey's Ladies' Book*; and all its forays into seriousness have slightly the flavor of slumming on the other side of the sexual tracks. At the beginning, after a self-congratulatory introduction, we are given some sample articles by various celebrities which give an idea of the early audience level. Chanel writes jerkily about fashion, Bernhardt writes breathlessly about herself, Pavlova ditto. Later, no matter how many articles by statesmen or scientists appear, or how much space is devoted to works by "serious" writers, the editorial attitude to all this is still somewhat self-consciously earnest, still faintly aimed at improving the minds of ladies. "Can This Marriage Be Saved?" is a more characteristic and comfortable feature, along with pieces on manners and sex, dress and food, and the romantic and sentimental fiction slightly disguised—at least by the editors of this book—as good literature, perhaps because some of the authors were famous, like Edna Ferber and Daphne duMaurier. Illustrations for their stories in the *Journal* resemble fashion plates, just as in *Godey's* 100 years ago.

The level of all this egregiously feminine fare is admittedly much higher than that of *Godey's Ladies' Book*. After all women did leave home, go to college, and enter politics and business during the *Journal*'s history. But somehow the underlying spirit remains the same. The tone is really set by domestic and emotional concerns. Sandwiching articles by heavy-weight men on matters of world interest between pieces on the personal habits of theatrical personalities or instructions for festive tablesetting manages to reduce the essential seriousness of each. The *Journal* seems, in fact, always to apologize for itself a bit, as *Godey's* never needed to do. Back in 1883 the *Journal* was indeed launched on the theory that women are intelligent and literate beings with a sense of humor, whereas *Godey's*, a generation earlier, still held strictly to their duty, purity and beauty. Nevertheless even for the *Journal* editors, female attitudes to life and female matters of interest were still perceived as quite separate, somewhat light-weight, and therefore always in need of a little ballast borrowed from the really important world of men. Times have changed again, of course. Women are no longer apologetic about their sex if they have ambition and intelligence. Everybody knows that domestic matters concern men just as directly as war and politics concern women. The editorial assumptions of all women's magazines have had to alter, even though men and women have probably changed very little.

Anne Hollander

Anne Hollander's book on the clothed figure in art will be published next year by Viking Press.

American Picturebooks From Noah's Ark To the Beast Within by Barbara Bader

(Macmillan; $45)

American children's picturebooks, designed to fill the needs of the seven-and-under set, are fetchingly simple on the surface, but decidedly more complex underneath. The complexities begin with defining a picturebook itself. In Barbara Bader's words: "A picturebook is text, illustration, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; and foremost an experience for a child. As an art form it hinges on the interdependence of words and pictures, on the simultaneous display of two

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facing pages, and on the drama of turning the page." An examination of something so broadly defined demands a survey of enormous scope, and *American Picturebooks from Noah's Ark to the Beast Within* is just that. It is not a nostalgic account, nor one of the dutiful acolyte praising her idols; rather, it is a critical analysis of those picturebooks and their creators worthy of note, with due reference to the tempering influences—technical, social, economic—which help to shape them.

In the United States, the picturebook industry burgeoned in the '20s. European publishers, with the work of Crane, Caldecott, Greenaway and others, had already carved themselves a profitable niche with young readers, and their American counterparts were now technologically capable of following suit. However, children's book departments, much less picturebooks, were still a rarity, so power and influence were mostly concentrated in a few people: Louise Seaman and May Massee, editors at Macmillan and Doubleday respectively; Anne Carroll Moore of the New York Public Library; and Bertha Mahony, a bookseller who founded *The Horn Book* magazine (which devoted itself to children's books) in 1924.

During these years, picturebook growth was spurred by the new attention focused on young children in the psychological studies of Gessell and Piaget. Bader quotes Gessell from his foreword in *The Child's First Books*: "'the pre-school child lives in a world of its own; . . . it is a real world and not simply a crude or weak approximation to that of the adult.'" The possibilities this conclusion suggested were not only a boon to the future of kindergartens and nursery schools, but also contributed to an expanded conception of the scope of picturebooks.

The changes did not appear immediately, but the early '30s saw alphabet books and nursery rhymes give way to original and derived folktales, instructional stories, and different views of everyday life. From the '40s onward, almost anything became fair game. Bader sifts through the deluge in chronological fashion, jumping forward and backward significantly only in self-contained subjects like informational books. She spotlights approximately 60 authors and artists, and briefly mentions dozens more. Among those discussed at length are: Wanda Gág, Roger Duvoisin, Feodor Rojankovsky, Dr. Seuss, Marcia Brown, Ruth Kraus and Crockett Johnson.

Looming largest in her distinguished group are Margaret Wise Brown and Maurice Sendak. Brown was "the first author of picturebooks to be recognized in her own right. The first, too, to make the writing of picturebooks an art." She was the master of the 'interlude,' which she defined as "' . . . somewhere between a story and a poem, a dwelling on some theme in words, a recreation of some experience. It is the thing some five-year-olds do in their own writings.'" It was a thing she made beloved in books like *Goodnight Moon* and *The Runaway Bunny*. As an artist, Sendak has displayed a scope hitherto unseen in picturebooks, "drawing with nineteenth-century decorousness for the Else Minarik books, with breadth and dash for the Sesyle Joslyn books, with surrealistic particularity for his brother Jack's *Circus Girl* . . ." He later added, among many others, the Nutshell Library, *Where the Wild Things Are*, and *In the Night Kitchen*. "Beyond the manifold influence of his work, it has served to bring together the 'popular' and the 'artistic' strains . . ." which were previously sundered. Both Brown and Sendak worked (Sendak still does) to please themselves, eschewing established molds or repeating a variation on an earlier success for the intriguing attempt at something new. It marks their work with occasional failures, but their triumphs stand alone.

In her evaluation, Bader foregoes using any absolute yardstick. Her perspective is implicitly contemporary, but she doesn't pit books from different eras, or books in divergent styles, against each other for comparison. Hence, she shows equal enthusiasm for the "folk quality" of Wanda Gág's *Millions of Cats* and the more abstract "language of form and color" in Leo Lionni's *Little Blue and Little Yellow*.

Presumably, everyone has his own idea of notable contributors to picturebooks, and Bader's selection will undoubtedly raise a hue and cry in some quarters. Many of the recipients of the Caldecott medal—the most prestigious of the awards given for children's book illustration—have a place in the narrative, but often for books other than their medal winners. The Caldecott medal itself is mentioned only incidentally, and then not with veneration. This will not surprise anyone familiar with

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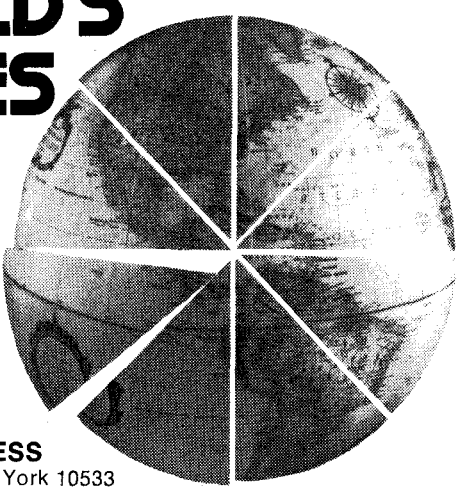

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Bader's recent essay included in *Newberry and Caldecott Medal Books 1966-1975*; she has few kind words for the Caldecott selections of the past 10 years. Inevitably, Bader's study reflects her own taste and sympathies, but it is not intrinsically personal in the manner of Selma Lanes' *Down the Rabbit Hole*. And though Bader omitted some people I would have included (*e.g.*, Arnold Lobel and Nancy Ekholm Burkert), her choices clearly show diversity and balance.

We could indulge in an endless debate over the propriety of Bader's selections, but they are perfectly defensible, which is all anyone can justifiably ask for. Besides, no conceivable omission or unwarranted inclusion detracts from much of Bader's achievement. Hers is the first attempt to compile a comprehensive history of picturebooks in this country, and it dwarfs earlier related efforts. Other works, like Diana Klemin's *The Art of Art for Children's Books*, and the continuing series, *Illustrators of Children's Books*, have the advantage of presenting information on all illustrators, not just contributors to picturebooks, but Bader examines both writers and artists, and deals with her subject in far greater detail. Her discussion of the d'Aulaires, for example, explains the intricacies of stone lithography, and the art of Rojankovsky is set against the background of the commercial and esthetic motivations of the Golden Books creators. Such depth takes Bader's work beyond the realm of the elaborate catalogs which have preceded it.

The design of the book, too, deserves credit. With almost 700 illustrations, 130 in full color, the logistics of synchronizing pictures and text within a coherent framework are staggering; yet page after page is beautifully handled, yielding a continuous feast of graphics. It is unfortunate that Bader must frequently elucidate aspects of full color effects with only black-and-white examples, but more color pictures would assuredly have driven the price out of sight. At that, only libraries and perhaps the richest or most dedicated of dilettantes will be willing to invest in a $45 book, but those who do will not be disappointed.

Stephen Krensky

Stephen Krensky's forthcoming children's book, *A Big Day for Scepters* (Atheneum), will be published this spring.

Fly by Night by Randall Jarrell Pictures by Maurice Sendak

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $5.95)

There is a great distance between the callow clutter of books-for-kids and the high haunted aeries of American fantasies as told by Randall Jarrell or pictured by Maurice Sendak. These two fantasy kinsmen have worked together before (*The Bat-Poet, The Animal Family*) and *Fly By Night* is the last of these collaborations. Jarrell finished the tale shortly before his death. Sendak has now provided the pictures.

Jarrell was a master of the pleasant seemings of American juvenile literature that hide grim truths. *The Animal Family*, a Newberry Honor Book, is a seemingly peaceful pastoral about a hunter who seeks and finds companions. It is an idyllic tale so tranquil that we are apt to overlook the fact that the hunter befriends each of his "sons" over a cashiered mother. That fact, and that the only female of the book is a mermaid in whom the hunter sees his dead mother, hints that something is amiss in Eden.

Fly By Night is likewise an embodiment of the wish for companions. David lives on New Garden Road and, because "there aren't any children for him to play with," spends his waking hours daydreaming in a tree house. Sometimes he is accompanied by a striped cat who makes the tree swallows uneasy and "never stays long."

That is how David spends his days. At night David exercises an angelic prerogative: "At night David can fly. In the daytime he can't. In the daytime he doesn't even remember that he can."

At night David floats while others sleep and in his clairvoyance can see their dreams; his father's of his diminutive stature, his mother's mixed with pancakes and feathers, his dog's of chasing a rabbit. Sendak pictures one of these with David nestled embryonically in a tree while the cat malevolently eyes what the feline styles "dancing mice." To hardnosed David the mice seem more frightened than dancing but, for some reason, he is powerless and cannot tell the cat "they're afraid of you."

David is as powerless as Huckleberry Finn, another floater, when in his tree perch he cannot save his friend Buck; as powerless as the aerial Peter Pan trying to persuade Wendy. David cannot help the mice, cannot ask a fleeing rabbit to wait, and his hovering presence makes the ponies shy. Though he exercises Superman's power of flight, all his potential companions are the retiring Clark Kents of the animal world who take flight at his appearance.

And so he turns away from them and looks above, to a winged superior, to a night bird awake like himself. A striped owl with a small fish in its claws befriends him. The owl speaks to David in poetry and invites him to her nest where two owlets rest. To hardnosed David the unfeathered owlets make a sorry picture but he sees in the loving eyes of the mother owl that she "doesn't know how they look."

The owl tells her three nestlings a bedtime story, one that they can fall to sleep by before daybreak, and one that is the keystone to *Fly By Night*. It is the story of an owlet who is all alone and wishes for company. A great owl comes and tells him this will only come to pass if he leaves his mother's nest and flies in the daylight. The owlet departs, struggles in the tumult of "unfriendly day," clumsily finds footing on a branch, and finally meets and makes a sisterly companion of another owlet in a tree at whose base a dead owl lies. The two of them wend their way back through the harsh sunlight and the crows to the original nest where they welcome the arrival of night, the moon, and the owl they call "Mother" against whose breast they nestle making brooding sounds.

Once the owl has told the bedtime story she accompanies David home where he wakes to sunlight and forgets. Twice David struggles to remember, to link night and day in a simile: "the owl looks at me like . . . like . . .—" but before he can remember sunlight streams into the kitchen and "his mother looks at him like his mother."

Where David lacks the power of "like" Sendak is gifted. When the book ends, for example, we might expect an illustrator to provide a picture of David's mother in the kitchen preparing him pancakes. Instead, Sendak gives us her likeness: the cat on the kitchen table and, in the window behind her, a fledgling swallow struggling to fly by day. It is the same brooding cat that eyed the "dancing mice" and whose eyes and stripes recall that of the owl pictured before, the owl that held a small fish in its claws.

Sendak illuminates Jarrell's nocturnal hallucinations of "the owl's white world" with the same power he brought to the Grimms in his *Juniper Tree and*

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Other Tales. Sendak's David is pubescent and floats always by the light of the moon. The two-page picture that follows the bedtime story is lunar brillance: David floats against the mammoth brooding eyes of the owl, above paired ducks and rabbits, above a mother and child and above a shepherdess and her flock between whom is a small plank carved with the name "Angelina."

David lives in the same superstitious and myth-filled world where angels are made. It is a world where "like" carries no force and invisible passions or emotions must be wholly made over into visible and physical shapes: gods, and angels, wise owls. And it is a world of strict separations of night from day, child from companions, mother from child that become other separations: "dancing mice" and frightened mice, unfeathered owlets and lovable offspring, hardnosed literality and what is figured in dreams.

Fly By Night will be read by dreamy youths like David, those same youths who in their tree houses have read of others that were ordinary too but, like Tarzan or Superman or Peter Pan, were gifted with aerial mobility. It is a gift of the artist of *In the Night Kitchen* and the author of *The Bat-Poet* to youths in love with night and the creatures that, like Batman or Dracula or Zorro, are vivid then but grow anemic at daybreak.

And it is a book that speaks to their parents, to those youths' fathers nestled in their easy chairs with books that transport them to the knightly world of detectives. It speaks to their mothers, knees under their chins, reading of the possessions that were Salem's lot, who have gone with the wind and wish to go again to moonlight trysts on mansion savannahs. *Fly By Night* is for us, Davids, hardnosed and slow to "like," for whom fantasy provides what we cannot find at daybreak: a way to be in dreams awake.

Jerry Griswold

Jerry Griswold teaches English at Northeastern University.

Coming

Harold Bloom

on

Elizabeth Bishop

An OPEN LETTER from T. J. Holt

TO ALL GOLD BELIEVERS

When gold prices plummeted toward $100 last summer, some leading gold advocates abandoned their own long-stated "convictions" — leaving their followers adrift and bewildered. Some others even turned completely around and predicted that the gold price would drop below $100 imminently.

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The Back of the Book

Gilmore's Future

Gary Gilmore has done something special with public emotion by catching us in the middle of our most heated feelings, and breaking their momentum. As a killer he assaults the idea of common good, and so engages mass desire for revenge. But as a man grabbing at death, he overtakes that desire himself, as if to say: you want revenge? I'll give you revenge—and we pull back instinctively. The result is hypnotic. We are dealing with someone who repeatedly refuses to go in expected directions, like a smart comedian. Even now, the date of his execution set firm at January 17, we suspect that he'll try to jump the gun again, or that we'll skip January 17 this year, or that the rifles will misfire, or that his mother will prevail.

That's how it goes with Gilmore; he creates his own air. Editorials fire at him, plead in his behalf; the ACLU rolls out briefs; moralists are baffled; TV readies itself for *The Gary Gilmore Story*. Meanwhile, morning and night, Gilmore is dragged down corridors in the newsclips like Lee Harvey Oswald before Jack Ruby stepped into the picture, gaunt and hollow from hunger strikes and pill-popping, at the same time intimating some connection with us, his audience, who hang in his air with him, as if he were a cousin thrice removed. Yet the connection is closer than that. His performance aside, Gilmore represents an option against the future, which is a central source of his appeal.

Until recently the future was very big in America. It still is, at least among specialists who forecast food production, population growth, thermonuclear capabilities, mineral and energy supplies, and all the other things we vaguely nod at. But most of us flounderers are stock still on this subject lately, fixed instead on small things like Gilmore whose mere existence accuses us of the imperfectibility both of people and laws, an accusation with which we've grown too comfortable. In his individual decison against his own future, he seems to deny the future in the abstract, to offer a philosophy. Denying futures is Gilmore's specialty, after all; he became a star that way.

So he appeals on the same grounds on which he repels. This poetic-looking bastard who coolly killed two men and tried to screw a demented girl now calls his judges "moral cowards" for prolonging his life, while we gaze on as if his denunciation were sensible, brave. Crazy as he probably is, Gilmore has touched a chord, as they say. It's not his decision that's interesting; what is interesting is the apparent reasonableness of it.

Yet is his wish reasonable? Crazy or sane, would Gilmore mind so much the prospect of living if he would not be encumbered with the spectres of his two victims and the screams of their families and the glare of the whole moral world burning in his head? Would he shun the future if it were guaranteed?—not likely. Gilmore's decision against the future is precisely our own—that if it can't be perfect, if we can't stomach how imperfect (painful, haunted) the future will be, why then it's not worth having. Maybe the accumulation of our victims has gotten to us the way it got to Gilmore, so that we too see blood in every toilet. But the equation is ultimately inept. We are not all murderers just because one man's death-wish diminishes us.

If American history has a lesson it is that the future (people or laws) is not perfectable, that to the contrary, salvation is a troubled state and depends absolutely on the acknowledgment of imperfections, and on the acting upon them. If one is less afraid of acknowledging than of acting, then maybe it is better to die, which seems the inner reasonableness of Gilmore's wish—he knows he'd kill again. But that is not the national problem; we're not as sure of ourselves as Gilmore. We simply don't want to be bothered with risks any more, and so are fascinated by this death-seeker who advises that if you can't have everything, take nothing. Wrong to the end.

Roger Rosenblatt

Correspondence

Inaugural Redress

To the editors:

John Hersey ("An Inaugural Address," *TNR*, Dec. 11, 1976) quotes President Eisenhower's Farewell Address in his article assailing the military industrial complex. Mr. Hersey quotes two noncontiguous sentences from two separate paragraphs.

In fact, the six-paragraph discussion of the military-industrial complex in the Farewell Address *favors* what formerly had been known as the Arsenal of Democracy. The first paragraph reads: "A vital element in keeping the peace is our military establishment. Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction."

The President subsequently noted: "[N]ow we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions." And again, on the rise of the military-industrial complex: "We recognize the imperative need for this development."

Since Mr. Hersey chose to cloak himself in the authority of President Eisenhower, your readers might be served in the reminder that the speech Hersey quotes sees the military-industrial complex as the *good* guys; the bad guys were to be found in Moscow and Peking. Such distortions as found in the Hersey piece ordinarily might be overlooked, but since the Farewell Address repeatedly has been misrepresented, notice here is appropriate.

George Steven Swan
Columbus, Ohio

In reply:

Mr. Swan's word "distortions" is one to which I must take vigorous exception. As he notes, I am by no means the first to have underlined the Eisenhower warning, and it has never been a distortion or a misrepresentation to do so. That General Eisenhower was in favor of strong defenses and support

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systems was well known and was not surprising in his address; that he should go out of his way to warn against the dangers inherent in them was news then and is still no less surprising than I indicated. My article was not about good guys and bad guys; it was about the need for appropriate restraints on greed and overreaching power in our public life—a need that Eisenhower recognized.

John Hersey

Dangerous Remarks

To the editors:

Thank you for Henry Fairlie's article about John Toland ("The 'Historian-Reporter,'" *TNR*, Dec. 11, 1976).

I experienced much the same reaction when I heard Mr. Toland speak at the Danbury Library a few weeks ago. The audience exhibited a shocking camaraderie with Mr. Toland about the cute tales of Hitler's private life. Only a few of us questioned him about his conclusions, and when we did the others stared at us as if were from another planet. One man who had lived in Nazi Germany stated "Mr. Toland, such books are dangerous." A few of us applauded and again we were stared at.

My feeling of outrage at Mr. Toland's irresponsible remarks will not go away, and my physical skin-crawling reaction to the audience is a reminder of the years I spent in Nazi Germany.

I have written to Doubleday to protest their promotion of the book. But where are the others who should be protesting the book publicly, the people whose names carry more weight than mine?

Eleanor Bancroft
Newtown, Connecticut

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